GREAT WAR COMPETITION.

SHORT STORIES

EDITED BY G. ARTHUR PEARSON (OF PEARSON'S WEEKLY)

No. 489. FOR WEEK ENDING MAY 14TH, 1898. [ONE PENNY.

THE PUBLIC HEALTH

DEPENDS LARGELY ON THE PURITY OF FOOD.

Beware of Mixtures.—"We cannot imagine that our ideal pure Cocoa—a perfect food in itself—can be improved by such additions (as Kola and Hops). In fact, we are of opinion that its dietetic value would be altered, and that it would become a medicinal preparation."—*Guy's Hospital Gazette.*

"Kola is a Drug pure and simple."—*Epicure.* **"Kola is not harmless."**—*Medical World*

CADBURY's Cocoa is Absolutely Pure.

CADBURY'S

Cocoa is the most sustaining beverage for brain fatigue and for muscular force.

"Consumers should be supplied with a dietetic article whose purity is unquestioned, and without doubt this essential quality is the characteristic virtue of Cadbury's Cocoa."—*Public Opinion.*

CADBURY'S

Cocoa stands among the highest, if it has not attained the first place for its purity. According to analysis it stands head and shoulders above all other Cocoas."—*To-Day.*

"The name of Cadbury may always be accepted as an unimpeachable guarantee of excellence."—*Happy Home.*

"CADBURY's Cocoa knows no superior as a perfect food, and is absolutely genuine."—*Gentlewoman.*

☛ **When you ask for CADBURY's Cocoa see that you get it, as commoner and mixed qualities are often pushed for the sake of extra profit.**

Digitized by Google

"Its food value is double that of bread made from ordinary wheaten flour."—
Lancet.

HOVIS BREAD

Frames the Form and Forms the Frame.

HOVIS BREAD is baked and delivered daily by all leading bakers. HOVIS BISCUITS and FLOUR—the latter packed in 3½lb. and 7lb. Bags, with recipes enclosed—by all leading Grocers, or 6d. and 1/- Samples of Bread and Biscuits will be sent on receipt of stamps by the

HOVIS-BREAD FLOUR COMPANY Limited,
MILLERS, MACCLESFIELD.

BE SURE EACH LOAF IS STAMPED HOVIS.

Every Economical Housewife
uses

Tower Tea.
Tower Coffee.
Tower Cocoa.

IN PACKETS AND TINS ONLY.
SOLD EVERYWHERE.

WHOLESALE:

TOWER TEA LTD.,
5, JEWRY STREET, LONDON, E.C.

ATLAS LOCKSTITCH MACHINE.

Works by hand or treadle. Guaranteed 4 years. Equal in quality and size to any machine. To ensure satisfaction, we will send machine on receipt of 5/- P.O. for ONE MONTH'S TRIAL. Balance can be paid **5/- Monthly.** Call or write for designs and Samples of work. **39/-**

THE ATLAS SEWING MACHINE CO.,
183B, High St., Camden Town, London, N.W.
63 Seven Sisters Road. :14 High Rd., Kilburn.

TRILENE REGD TABLETS THE ONLY CURE for STOUTNESS Registered by GOVERNMENT Price 2/6

ALL FAT PEOPLE

Readily **Reduce Weight** and **Cure Corpulency Permanently** by taking **TRILENE TABLETS** (Regd.) for a few weeks. They are very agreeable, harmless, and never fail to PRESERVE both HEALTH and FIGURE without change of diet. **Reduction begins immediately.**

An English Countess writes: "*Your Trilene Tablets act admirably*"

SAMPLES OF TESTIMONIALS.

MR. CLAUDE CARTER, of Thorn House, Johnstone, N.B., says: "Your Tablets much reduced my weight and I have been waiting to see if it was permanent, and so it has proved."

MR. CANHAM, 87, Alexandra Road, Norwich, says: "Tablets cured my wife two years ago of extreme stoutness. It has never returned."

MARION TAYLOR, of Church Farm, St. James, Halesworth, says: "Have lost quite two stone."

A. PEEL, of Darley Hydro, Matlock, writes: "They have reduced and benefited me a good deal."

MR. BUTLER, Surgeon, Hampton Manor, Evesham, says: "My patient lost more than one stone."

MR. G. LOVE, 4, Kirk Street, Peterhead. "I think them wonderful not only to reduce fat but as a medicine.

Send 2/6 to **THE TRILENE ASSOCIATION, 66 Finsbury Pavement, London, E.C.**

FREE **FREE**
OUR
£21 BICYCLES £21

to every person taking advantage of this advertisement and the offer we will send. The Bicycle is packed in a good crate, and is sent to your address FREE of any monetary charge, with one exception, that you pay carriage to railway company when you receive the Bicycle. We are giving these machines away as a *startling advertisement*, feeling assured that after you receive the Bicycle you will recommend us to all your friends as being a firm to be relied on for honest, straightforward dealings.

£21 BICYCLES £21

For 1s. 6d. we will forward our Gents' Evingle de Cravate, or Ladies' Broché together with our offer, and on your complying with offer, the Bicycle is forwarded Free of Charge as above stated. To save any disappointment, we will refund money in full to any person sending in, after all the Bicycles have been *given away*.

Send stamped addressed envelope together with P.O. or stamps for 1s. 6d.

THE ANGLO-AMERICAN AGENCY (Dept. 16),
196 St. Vincent Street, GLASGOW.

£20
Hairdressers fitted up. Estimates free.

Tobacconists Commencing. See Ild. Guide (250 pages) 3d. How to open a cigar store, £20 to £2,000 **Tobacconists Outfitting Co.**, 186, Euston Road, London. The largest and original house (50 years reputation. Mgr., H. Myers

"JUNO" CYCLES ARE THE VERY BEST.

DIAMONDS from £10. 16/8 monthly. JUNO Lady's or Gents' Safety £12 12/- 21/- monthly. £14 14/-, 21/6 „ £16 16/-, 28/- „ Write for New Season's List of JUNO Cycles and Accessories, sent post free to any part.

METROPOLITAN MACHINISTS' CO. LTD., 75 and 76 Bishopsgate Without, London, E.C.; and at Piccadilly Circus, exactly opposite the Criterion, London, W. *N.B.—Every JUNO Guaranteed.* New JUNO Riding School, 1,700ft., now open.

SEVEN PRIZE MEDALS.

These series of pens neither scratch nor spurt. They glide over the roughest paper with the ease of a soft lead pencil. An assorted sample box for 7 stamps from the works, Birmingham.

KEATING'S POWDER IS USEFUL

in preserving blankets and furs from Moths. Sprinkle well with the Powder before putting away.

KILLS BLACKBEETLES & FLEAS.
Tins 3d., 6d. and 1/- each.

Advertisements should be sent to "Short Stories" Advertisement Department, Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

Digitized by Google

SHORT STORIES

No. 489.] [One Penny.

For the Week ending May 14th, 1898.

The Failure of the Class.

The doctor had ten miles to ride before he reached home. The road was muddy; the air was not cold, but it was raw and chill, and the mud clung to his horse's fetlocks. Old Calline put down her head and plodded on through the mire. The doctor's shoulders drooped over her neck; the rain, which had ceased, had soaked his shabby great-coat and dripped down over his mud-splashed boots.

"How untidy I do look!" he grumbled, as he took out his handkerchief to brush the drops from his face and noticed the holes in the linen. "I don't believe that Aunt Maggie ever mends my stockings. I look just what I am, a shabby country doctor! Confound it, how he ground it into me!"

Old Calline stumbled; he pulled her head up sharply.

"It's not your fault, old girl, that I missed marrying the only woman I ever loved, and settled down in this out-of-the-way part; and now, when my old class-mate comes to see me, I am cut up because I see how he has succeeded and I have failed. I suppose I am so busy usually, I don't see things. Oh, dear! I'm the failure of the class!"

His laugh rang out, jarring the air, not at all the loud, genial laugh which many a patient had found better than medicine. Old Calline pricked up her ears and struggled into a heavy trot, as if struck. He patted her with a soothing word. The doctor's "softness" with respect

All rights reserved.]

Digitized by Google

to animals was a common jest in the country. The old mare, feeling all was well and that her easy-going master had not gone crazy, relaxed into her customary jog; and John Fair's thoughts returned to the channel in which they had run since the meeting with Dr. Phil Martin.

Martin was a man rather below than above the middle height. He had a dogged, pleasant manner, with a certain nerve and quickness of vision, but in no wise a man marked out for success; yet Martin was a great city physician, earning hundreds a year, while Fair took cows and pigs for a long doctor's bill, and lived in an old cottage with an old woman to care for him.

There was something in the city man's clothes, in his neat-clipped, assured enunciation, in his air of one accustomed to deference, in his very courtesy of manner and word, which spoke of the man who knew he had succeeded and which galled the soul of the man who knew he had failed.

Martin and he had been class-mates together; they had been house surgeons on the staff of the same hospital, never actually intimate, always thrown a great deal in each other's way. Twice it had befallen them to have to tackle one of those medical puzzles that have a poignant interest, because the success or failure in solving them means life or death. And both times Phil was wrong and he was right.

On another occasion Phil had his way and the poor fellow had died. The autopsy showed that he, John Fair, could have saved him. It was a dreadful mortification to Phil; it was something different but quite as keen in its pain to John; he had actually burst into tears after a night of frantic effort to save the man, he having gone into the house-staff room for a moment and hearing of the man's death there.

"Oh! I could have saved him," he had muttered, fortunately so low that nobody heard him.

And yet this was what he had become—a country doctor, who lived on his farm and augmented his professional earnings by selling stock.

"And because I took the medical journals and bought all the new instruments, and wore my old overcoat to get books, and wrote articles on pneumonia, I thought I was in touch with the world. I'm not in it!" John uttered the words savagely aloud. There was no one to hear. Old Calline paid no attention; she was accustomed to hear the doctor discuss his cases.

Colonel Barnes and the doctor were great chums. Once a week, the colonel, the doctor, Miss Lettie Barnes and the colonel's wife, played whist; and then the colonel mixed one of his famous punches, and he and the doctor would sit until late and chat about things in general.

The doctor always played with Mrs. Barnes, who was the most docile of pupils and invariably played according to rule. Hers was what is called a safe game. Miss Letty, on the contrary, would have delighted the great Desbarolles with her brilliant ventures and her subtle schemes and traps. The colonel played a straightforward, rather daring game. There was an almost unbroken record of victories for the brother and sister; yet the doctor was a good player, a fine player!

It was Fair's secret, unavowed ambition to play whist sometimes with Miss Letty. Miss Letty was not young; indeed she was distinctly old, being ten years the senior of the Colonel, who owned fifty-four—fourteen years longer at the game of life than the doctor. She was a pretty, plump, cheerful little gentlewoman, who didn't look a day older than fifty, and wore dainty black dresses and a widow's cap. The widow's cap and a little diamond ring were the only outward signs of Miss Letty's romance. For ten years she had been betrothed to a young Scotsman, whose father had so deeply offended her brother that it took ten years and the young lover's conspicuous gallantry in the army to soften old Colonel Barnes' resentment; and then, instead of her lover, there came to Letty only a word of farewell scrawled on her own photograph, and the story of a gallant death out in India.

The doctor believed in her grief as he believed in her friendship or her brother's. She was not one to change old friends for new. Yet, this was the barb of the sting, here was Miss Letty, when her nephew, home from college for his holidays, fell ill, importuning his mother to send to Memphis for a doctor. He had attended Arthur on several occasions, and liked the young fellow greatly. To have another doctor called for Arthur was like a blow between the eyes. Yet this is what had happened; he heard it just now from the old butler whom he had met.

And this doctor, this distinguished physician, was Phil Martin!

John Fair was returning from a visit to Widow Little's boy and was passing the station when the train came in. He knew Phil instantly, for all the flesh he had put on, and the brown beard. But he was obliged to mention his own name before Dr. Martin recognised him; then to be sure, he mustered a cordial smile and shook John's hand warmly.

"One of the pleasures I've counted on in coming to this—coming here, has been getting a glimpse of you, old man," he smiled as he spoke—Phil Martin's old, jovial, complacent smile. "You're coming with me, I suppose?"

"Not this morning," John stammered. He felt the blood pumping into his heart in a hot gush of mortification; he knew it coloured his cheek. Martin was cordial—offensively cordial, it appeared to the doctor, whose nerves were unstrung. He kept harking back to the doctor's own history; and turned him off almost roughly.

Martin's eyes gravely roamed over the not very cheerful surroundings and then back to the carriage of the Barnes' and the sleek horses—a queer contrast to the surroundings; last of all to the doctor's old Calline patiently waiting untied, for her master. A flicker of some keener feeling lit his shrewd grey eyes.

"You were born hereabouts, weren't you, John?" he said in a gentle tone.

"He pities me, confound him!" thought the country doctor.

"My father had a farm ten miles down the river," he answered shortly.

"Must be a very pretty country in summer," Martin observed suavely; and again John resented his evident desire to be civil.

John helped the distinguished physician into the carriage and bade him good-bye. There was talk of seeing each other soon again, but no mention of the patient, no medical inquiries. Plainly the new doctor recognised that he was the only responsible party in the case; there wasn't even a fiction of a consultation. So the carriage drove away, and John climbed up on old Calline and went at his own pace home.

His reflections did not brighten as he went along. When a man is young, he has the possibility of better things always at his elbow; and in himself is an illimit-

Digitized by Google

able vista of hope. There is no telling what he may not do. His dreams betoken his power, he fancies; and he picks himself up after every fall, convinced that he knows a new trick that will fling the jade Fortune at the next tussle. But after fifty, a man of sense has lost, among other illusions, the illusion of his own capacity. He has discovered his own limitations, and there is no drearier discovery.

"I'm the failure of the class," groaned John again, as he alighted at his own door. He had to call several times before Uncle Bob, Maggie's husband, could summon resolution to tear himself from the kitchen fire and shuffle out in the yard. The doctor did not reprove him; he walked stiffly up the steps, stumbling on the last, which was broken. In fact, it had been broken for a month. Half-a-dozen times had the doctor spoken to the old man about it; but the days when he spoke Bob had had a pain in his back, and the days when Bob did not have the pain the doctor hadn't spoken. He was about to give vent to his annoyance, in a torrent of angry words, when he saw the old man's penitent look, and remembered how often he had tramped miles in the mud to fetch books and papers for his master. Then the old man's wife hurried forward with a note that had been sent by Miss Letty Barnes.

The doctor's fingers shook a little as he opened the paper.

"It's confoundedly chilly," he muttered. Then he read:

"Dear Doctor.—Arthur was going to take this to you, and tell you something at the same time; but he caught a cold and I've begged him to stay in to-day. I think you had better come over to look at him as a physician, as well as a friend. He has no fever, and I have succeeded in persuading him to wear a continuous mustard plaster to-day. Please come as soon as you get this. After you have looked at Arthur perhaps you will do us a kindness. It is this, Arthur wanted to tell you. You know I hinted that he was interested deeply in a young Oxford lady whom he met while at college. Being his confidant, I cannot do more than hint. I know, my dear friend, that you will be rejoiced to know that our boy's romance has prospered. He brings tidings that she has accepted him; and it is his future father-in-law who is to come to pay us a visit to-day. I shall not tell you his name now, but save that for a pleasant surprise. Please come as soon as possible, and arrange to come back to supper and spend the night. We may have some whist!

"Very sincerely your attached old friend,
"Letitia Mainwaring Barnes."

The doctor whirled on his heel; his face was the face of a young man; his eyes were shining. Old Maggie held up her hand in surprise and he laughed.

"I've a very dear old friend, whom I knew years ago, to see at the Barnes's," he called. "Old Calline must get out again, but it's nearly two miles.

"Why did that idiot of a coachman tell me that cock-and-bull story?" he added to himself. "A fine mess he has made of things."

The doctor rode along far more briskly than he had ridden before that afternoon. He had made his best toilet, he sat erect in the saddle. At least, his old friends had not meant to wound him; worldly success or failure were of lesser account to that unworldly soul! "After all, I did cure the folks," he consoled himself, "and that's something."

Yet a sense of his failure remained in a corner of his consciousness and lent a touch of embarrassment to his greeting when he met Martin again. He had seen Arthur, who had nothing worse than a bronchial cold and was already on the mend, and disposed to apologise for not having braved the rain. "Aunt Letty sent old Nelson before I knew it," he laughed.

"Your aunt is always right," said John, and he passed on into the other room and Martin's presence. They were alone for a minute. Martin wrung his hand.

"Perhaps I shall not get the chance to say it, John," he said hurriedly—was there an unexpected warmth in his tone? "Look here, old fellow, what have you been doing here?"

"Nothing much, just vegetating and trying to kill as few of my confiding patients as possible." John stammered. He felt his sense of failure returning to him.

"I should say so," said Martin; "I've been hearing of you from the ladies and Arthur and other people. I know how you are responsible for not even the babies getting a chance to die hereabouts, and how you will get up in the night and ride ten miles for an old woman who can't give you even——"

"Strange to say, folks who haven't even a penny want to go on living," interrupted John, feebly jocular, and not knowing how to take Martin, who seemed almost excited.

"Confound it, while the rest of us have been trying to make money, you have been a missionary without expecting to save your soul by it! I know who is responsible for that little town over there actually having a drainage system. I know who sends the wine and the nourishment that he prescribes to his patients. There was an old man in the train who couldn't talk of you and keep his voice straight; he said you had saved his wife and made his daughter's last days easy! And all this while, in this desolate place where you hardly have a soul to throw a professional word to, you have kept at your studies and observations. You know——?" He named a great German doctor—"Well, he is over here. I saw him, last week; he was anxious to know about you. Your articles on hemorrhagic fever and your discoveries about the pneumonia-germ, he says are wonderful, wonderful!"

"Don't talk about discoveries," begged John, red and hot and ready to perspire with his embarrassment, "it is only a—a guess at the truth; the toxine has worked well; but it is only a surmise, a mere surmise, not yet ascertained. When I think of Koch—don't for goodness sake talk of discoveries, only my experiments."

"I tell you they are—big—big! You can call them what you please. And here you are lost in this place, and yet going on, never discouraged! At least, I know a man of genius, a real man of science when I see him. John, you're the success of the class!"

John gasped; and, as he caught at the nearest excuse for composure, Miss Letty came in.

"We are to have whist after supper," said she, smiling, "and Dr. Martin has asked sister Elly. I fear you will have to put up with me, Dr. Fair."

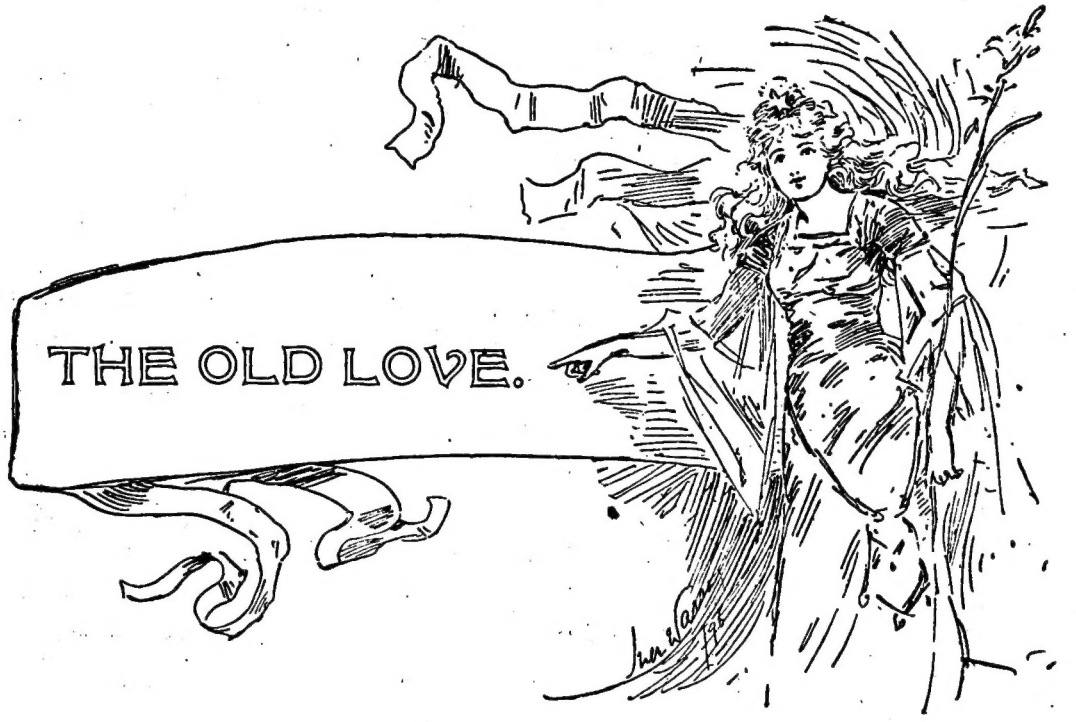
And it may be added here, that in spite of Dr. Martin's club game, Miss Letty justified all the doctor's hopes, and he played the game of his life.

And when he had retired Martin spoke to Arthur about him.

"He's a man of genius," he cried—"no—he's a child!"

MARGARET PINE.

Digitized by Google



For nearly ten years Drixie had been carving on the trees a fanciful design of his own contriving—a heart, in outline, with a sort of *plus* sign cut in the middle. It looked more like a religious symbol than anything else—a mystic emblem carved by some mediæval hermit quite out of place in this age.

But to Drixie it had quite another signification. It was a love token, little less than an open declaration in this youth's own estimation. And, indeed, it was open enough to those who knew him. For Drixie's proper name was Henry Hart, "Drixie" being a pet name, and hers was Jennie Cross, so the riddle was easily read. He was scarcely twelve then. Now he was a well-grown man, and not an unattractive specimen, either, but that boyish trick of carving his emblem upon the trees had persisted, too, until one dreamy afternoon Stella Gaylaird floated into Woodvale and began the upsetting of all its traditions. Then the suffering chestnuts and beeches obtained a respite.

How Jennie Cross had regarded the hieroglyphic propensities of her eccentric admirer is not definitely known. It is probable that of late years they had caused her some mortification of spirit, but there is no manner of doubt that she was far more deeply annoyed at their sudden cessation. Although she had never formally accepted Drixie—for except through the medium of his jack-knife he had never proposed—she had very naturally come to regard his devotion as one of her belongings. That she rather liked him, in spite of odd ways, was evident enough. At school they helped each other, on holidays they had many a romp together, and since they had grown to an age demanding more ceremony, he was her constant escort to "parties" of every description. The gossips had long ago decided that it was a "match," and their comments were singularly free from disapproval. Drixie's freaks were still a favourite topic, but both these young folks were generally liked.

The gossips however, struck quite another note when Stella appeared and all the young men went trailing after her, Drixie leading the van; yet I doubt that the faithless lover suffered half as much from their caustic criticisms as did poor Jennie from their outspoken sympathy. "What difference does it make to me," she protested, almost tearfully, but in vain.

Stella was a town girl and an interloper. For my own part, I can't admit that she was Jennie's equal in beauty, but she was distractingly pretty, and she had that wonderful gift of fascination which in most cases avails far more than beauty uninspired. If her golden hair was less abundant than Jennie's dark tresses, it was done up with more "style." If her features were less regular they were charmingly piquant. If her eyes had less depth and earnestness they were full of animation, and that her conversation was the brightest ever heard in Woodvale is out of the question. This last, which rather daunted the rest of her infatuated train, was to Drixie the greatest attraction of all; and this appreciation won him if not her heart at least considerable favour.

That poor Drixie made a pitiable spectacle of himself, and furnished the local gossips with plenty of choice material, must be conceded. Ultimately he made himself a nuisance, and had to be snubbed. All through the autumn he took Miss Stella out driving as often as she would consent to go; and for a time she found the brown country roads, winding amid wooded hills aglow with the rich fruit-tints of the ripening leaves, exceedingly alluring, and often gladdened Drixie's heart with her exclamations of delight. After the snow came they had a ride or two, but now Stella's manner was growing as cold as the winter air, and Drixie's sensitive heart was chilled.

Digitized by Google

He continued, nevertheless, to ring the door bell of her uncle's dwelling with unabated persistency, more and more frequently finding the young lady out. Finally he took advantage of her birthday very cleverly, as he fancied, to send her a present — a trinket of considerable value. His present was promptly returned. Then he called.

Stella was not at home—out for a ride with one of his rivals, he suspected. The next day, by the merest chance, he overheard her talking to a young fellow and laughing at him. He returned to his home in bitter wrath and ground the discarded jewel under his boot heel. For an hour he paced up and down his room, suffering torments of disappointment, rage and jealousy. At last there came a sudden revulsion of feeling.

He burst into tears, and his whole heart turned back with a passionate throb to Jennie. He longed as he had never longed for anything in the whole world before for her gentle sympathy, her comforting love. He hastened to her home. She was out—gone for a short walk, they told him, rather coldly. He ascertained the direction she had taken, however, and fairly ran along the road to overtake her.

Presently he noticed footprints, which some instinct told him were hers, leading aside into a little grove. He floundered through the snow, and soon found her standing beside an oak-tree. On its bark, obscured by years of growth and rusty with weathering, he saw his own boyish symbol—the big heart with the little cross cut within it—one of the first he had ever carved.

"Jennie! Jennie!" he cried.

The wretched girl was so glad to see him that she forgot all and held out her hand. He seized it and dropped on his knees in the snow.

"Oh, Jennie! Do you really love me so?"

The soft blush of welcome which was dawning upon her cheek flamed into angry scarlet, which spread and deepened till brow and ears and throat were all ablaze. Hot tears streamed from her eyes. She snatched away her hand and fled homeward, nor by his utmost efforts was he able to overtake her.

So he wandered along the village streets, bewildered and disconsolate, until the perversity of fate and his own marvellous aptitude for blundering again betrayed him. He saw some flowers displayed in the front window of one of the shops, a few pink carnations; but it suddenly occured to the woe begone Drixie that it might be a good idea to send these as a peace offering to the offended maiden.

The more he thought of it the more the ingenuity and delicate tact of the scheme impressed him. So he bought the flowers at a price that was sheer robbery on the dealer's part, and subsidised the assistant to deliver them. Upon the card which was to accompany them he wrote, "Dear Jennie, I am so sorry. Please forgive me, and don't take it so badly. I'll call to-morrow."

Then he went home, feeling almost elated. Now it happened that Jennie had given considerable attention to the "Language of Flowers," and she knew that pink carnations meant "Woman's love."

Bitterly self-conscious and burning with mortification she attributed to the unlucky Drixie a minuteness of knowledge and a subtlety of purpose which were as far from being his as was the hardness of heart with which she also credited him.

"He is returning me my love," she moaned. The unhappy worded note fully confirmed her in this opinion. It seemed to the proud girl a last humiliation, and she passed the night in fits of sobbing almost hysterical in their violence. When Drixie called the next morning she would not see him.

The months that followed were the most miserable that Drixie had ever known. He felt abominably ill-used. He adjured the society of all women, dark or fair, but found small comfort in that. He heard of Stella's departure without a pang, but when he thought of Jennie and how he had for ever forfeited her love, and even her friendship, he felt as if his heart would break.

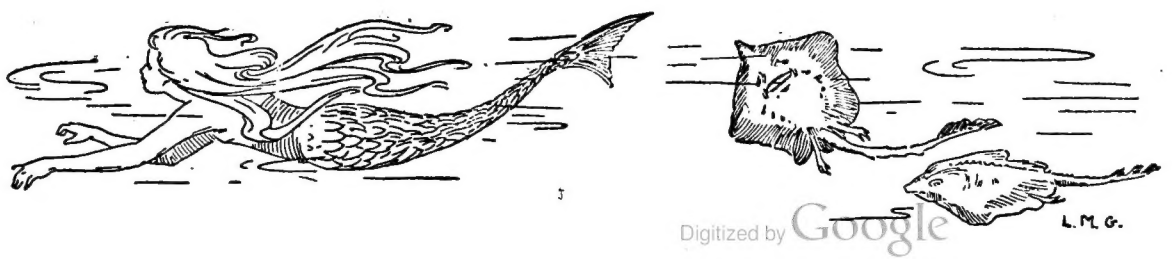
So he tried to forget his woes in close application to study, and did long and reckless bicycle rides across the country. If he could keep his heart pumping hard enough, it didn't seem to ache so cruelly.

One evening he was riding in a heedless fashion that had become habitual with him, down the steep grade that wound like a corkscrew round the precipitous sides of a hill. On the left was a perpendicular cutting; on the right was a sheer drop of several feet and below it a rugged slope obstructed by trees and stumps. Suddenly, about half way down, he perceived that the repairer had been at work on the side of the road next the cutting, and had set up a temporary fence to prevent vehicles from driving into an excavation which they had opened there, leaving a narrow track on the outer edge. And in the middle of this track, riding towards him with uncertain movements and obvious lack of confidence, he saw another cyclist. It was a girl—it was Jennie Cross. All this flashed before him in a moment. His speed was beyond control; there was not an instant for deliberation—scarcely time to act. He gave a sharp wrench to the right, his machine leapt from the verge, he felt himself hurled through the air like a sling-stone—then a stunning concussion, and all was dark and silent.

* * * * *

A few weeks later the young man was lying on a cot in a darkened room, slowly recovering. Jennie had just been allowed to enter—for the first time since the accident. She was holding his hand; her eyes were cast down in deep humility; her face was flushed, but sweetly resolute. "Drixie," she said, in a voice that hardly broke the silence, "Drixie dear, it was simply horrid of you to ask me that way—but I do."

H. T. D.



Digitized by Google

STORIES OF THE STOCK EXCHANGE.

Unearthed and Re-edited
by
Robert Machray.

No. 6.

ROTHSCHILD OUTWITTED.

One day about the middle of October, 1822, a large number of the brokers and dealers had gathered themselves together in little groups in and about the Stock Exchange.

To the casual eye, these gentlemen appeared to be conversing in their ordinary tones about nothing in particular, but when they were watched more closely, it was quite evident, from their furtive glances and other indications, that they were the victims of some excitement, some anxiety they were endeavouring to suppress.

The news had passed through Capel Court that Rothschild was "bearing" the market, and that as a consequence the price of the funds was slowly but sensibly being lowered. It was well known that the great financial magnate never entered into any transaction without having abundant reason for doing so.

The sources from which he obtained the information he acted upon were so numerous and excellent, and the influence he exercised throughout the whole of Europe by means of his connection with his brothers in Paris, Vienna, Naples, and elsewhere, was so tremendous, that his operations upon 'Change had a significance possessed by those of no other man.

"What then had happened?"

This was the question men were putting to each other—each one as cautiously as he could. The object of each one was to try to find out what his neighbour knew without letting him know whether he were better informed or not. This business of getting something and giving nothing in return, is one that is practised all the world over in some form or other, but nowhere so skilfully and so persistently as upon the Stock Exchange.

It soon became apparent to those who could read the signs that nothing, so far as was known, had occurred to lead Rothschild to take a pessimistic view of affairs on the Continent, which were then engaging the attention of the English people.

Still there the fact was. Brokers who were the recognised agents of Nathan Meyer were openly selling large quantities of consols and other high-class securities. Some said that half a million of the funds had been already disposed of; others were certain that the sales of Government stock, which had already been effected that morning, came to two or three times that amount.

Just as lions have their jackals, so the kings of finance have their own special dependants and hangers-on, eagerly waiting for some tit-bit of information, some tip or hint upon which to go, or, in despite of anything better, only too anxious to follow in the trail of these great men, and to do in their own small way what their masters were doing on a larger scale.

Thus, upon this occasion, a considerable number of the dealers, seeing how things were obviously going, also sold the funds; these again in their turn influenced others. The movement spread, the knots of men who had so far been discussing the matter with such quietness as we have noticed, broke up in some confusion; bad news of some sort was looked for; something like a panicky feeling began to prevail, the result being that at the close of the day there had been a drop of from two to three per cent. in the general list.

Nor did the following morning show any improvement. No intelligence of disaster had been received, but, on the other hand, neither had there been anything of a favourable character. The selling movement was continued without any marked attempt at checking it,

Copyright, 1898, by C. Arthur Pearson Ltd., in the United States of America.
Digitized by Google

and the public getting wind that something was wrong, sold a large amount of their genuine holdings, a circumstance which, of course, increased the depression in the market.

All that day Rothschild sat in his office, a cold, unemotional, inscrutable figure. There was nothing in his appearance to indicate the great wealth and power of the man, but the rigid pose, the dead colour of the face, the studied blankness of the eyes, the whole air of astonishing indifference to everything and everybody, the indescribable callousness and hardness of this remarkable being were sufficiently extraordinary and characteristic.

Every few minutes a visitor would be announced, and then would come in. Suddenly the whole aspect of the man would change and blaze with energy. When the newcomer had communicated his message, telling what was the price at the moment of the Funds, and the names of the parties who were buying and selling, question after question would be asked of him with lightning-like rapidity—questions so keen and so comprehensive that the whole ground was covered, the entire position analysed and grasped in a moment.

Never appearing on the Stock Exchange in person, and generally acting, when any great coup was being worked, through brokers different from those usually employed by him, no inkling of his real plans was ever betrayed to any of his subordinates. In former days some had presumed to think that they understood him, but they had soon been undeceived by some lesson which he contrived to make exceeding bitter and—expensive to them.

Here was a man who was infinitely able to keep his own counsel, having learnt very early in life that one of the chief uses of speech was to create confusion and conceal what his intentions were. He was feared; he was hated; but no one affected to despise or ignore him. He was their master, and they knew it.

Brokers had planned and plotted against him times without number, but the victory had nearly always been with him.

Now, when he had got the market exactly to the point at which he wished to have it through these late operations of his, there was no trace of satisfaction or pleasure to be seen on his countenance. This, in any case, was the nature of the man, but just at the moment he was in some little doubt how to proceed. All that day he had been expecting couriers from abroad, but as yet they had not come.

Late in the afternoon Rothschild returned to his house at Stamford Hill—a locality at that time considerably affected by members of the Stock Exchange. Close upon midnight a carriage and four drove up to his gate, and two figures, closely muffled up, issued from the coach, and after some slight delay were admitted into the mansion.

Rothschild had retired to bed, but as soon as he knew the names of his nocturnal visitors, he rose and dressed. Presently the three were closeted together.

Opposite to the house of Mr. Rothschild stood the residence of another wealthy dealer on 'Change. This gentleman, a Mr. Herbert, had that night been out at a friend's house, where he had formed one of the not least hilarious of a very hilarious party. As he drew near his own residence, he noticed the carriage and four standing before the gate of the great Hebrew financier. His attention was at once aroused by what he knew to be a very unusual sight, and, as often happens, the wine he had taken, instead of rendering him less acute, had rather tended to sharpen his intelligence.

Descending from his coach, he told his driver to await him some distance away in the shelter of a high wall, the shadow of which hid the carriage from view. Taking advantage of the cover given him by the darkness, he crept stealthily close up to the entrance of the Rothschild grounds, and there, unobserved, waited patiently to see if he could find out what was the meaning of this late visit to his neighbour's place.

An hour passed in this manner, and Herbert was beginning to think that after all no particular meaning was to be attached to the presence of the coach and four. He was just about to return to his own carriage, when he heard steps approaching. A minute more, and he beheld Rothschild accompanied by two men who were unknown to him, and who were wrapped up in such a way as to conceal their features, come through the gate and step into the carriage.

"To the City," was the order given by Rothschild to the driver.

"Something afoot—something very important indeed," Herbert murmured to himself. "This is no ordinary business. How am I to discover what it is?"

Then there came into his mind—probably born of the wine whose influence he still felt, a somewhat daring plan. He considered the matter for a brief space, for it was necessary to act quickly if he were to succeed in carrying out the stratagem by which he hoped to be as wise as Rothschild himself, and resolved to attempt it.

When he reached his own carriage, the coachman was fast asleep, and was roused with some difficulty. Having told him the direction in which the carriage he desired to follow had gone, he promised him a considerable reward if he should catch it up sufficiently to keep it in sight without himself being perceived; and here luck befriended him, so that when Rothschild had reached the street in which the banker's office was situated, Herbert was not far behind, and could easily see where the other was going with his companions.

Telling his driver to stop, Herbert got out, and sent his carriage back to the stable. Though Herbert had undoubtedly been to some extent under the influence of his potations when he had left the convivial party, his long wait in the night air had certainly sobered him completely, and yet scarcely had his man driven away than it appeared that Herbert was very drunk indeed.

Never was there a drunker man. He lurched about

Digitized by Google

from side to side, he reeled to and fro, he sang a snatch of a ribald song, he broke it off to shout aloud a loyal toast. In a word, he was so royally and mortally intoxicated that the wonder was that he did not fall in a heap, comatose and helpless, in the street.

The few people he met gave him but scant notice. It was a time when men drank deep, and their revels, when in the condition that Herbert was, excited no more than a good-natured smile or a half-indulgent oath. So when Herbert came staggering along, they passed him by with indifference.

Yet if anyone had watched his movements carefully, they would have seen that the drunken man was acting with a good deal of method.

Notwithstanding his reeling and lurching, he made his way as far as the office of Nathan Rothschild, and with a hoarse drunken scream knocked upon the door. Then, without further ceremony, he went in, to be met by the housekeeper, who was coming along the hall-way to see what the matter was.

When she saw this wild, dishevelled figure of a man, and realised the state in which he was, she broke into a great cry of terror. Yelling to her at the top of his voice to get out of his way, and heedless of the fright in which she was, he made as though he would push her aside. She, however, took hold of his arm, and began timidly to remonstrate with him.

For a moment Herbert seemed to yield. His face was turned towards the still open door. Then, as if changing his mind, he swung her somewhat roughly aside, uttering at the same time the most extraordinary Bacchanalian oaths. Knowing the exact position of Rothschild's particular den in the building, he at once made his way to it with many a stagger, each one of which seemed likely to be his last.

Meanwhile the housekeeper strove to hinder him from opening the door of the special chamber devoted to her master's use, and which he knew to be occupied at that very moment by Rothschild himself and the two men who had come with him only a short time before.

Putting her aside with some force, Herbert succeeded in entering Rothschild's private office, and no sooner had his foot crossed the threshold than, after swaying unsteadily about, as if in a vain effort to gain some degree of composure, he fell down flat on the floor, insensible and like one dead.

Behind the fallen man appeared the housekeeper, her face pale with vexation, fear, and horror.

"He's drunk," she gasped, "dead drunk."

"What is all this?" sternly demanded Rothschild, who had risen from his chair. His cheeks, too, were pallid. Master as he was of men, and of millions of money, there was always in his breast the haunting dread of assassination. He felt himself strong enough to provide against everything—but death. "Who is this?" he cried, pointing to the figure as it lay prone before him.

"He opened the door," protested the poor woman, "before I reached it—I'd heard him knock. Then he came in from the street, without as much as by your leave, or saying, 'What's your business.' I tried to restrain him, and to talk him over, so that he might go out quietly. But he thrust me aside, and I could do nothing with him."

She paused, and looked at her employer, whose appearance now indicated that that terrible fear which so often oppressed him was passing away.

"He is beside himself with wine," she continued. "He did not know what he was doing when he came in any more than he does now," she cried with hysterical tears.

"Opened the door, did he?" exclaimed Rothschild.

"Yes," she replied.

"But why was the door not locked?" demanded Rothschild.

"You came in yourself last, sir," she answered, "and you called to me not to mind as you entered."

"True. Well, what is to be done?" he asked. "We must do something for the man. He can't be left lying here in this condition. Yet he can hardly be thrust out into the street,—that might be the end of him. Who is it, I wonder?"

Meanwhile the two men who had come from Stamford Hill with Rothschild had looked on without saying a word. Now when Rothschild approached the drunken man, who was lying on his face full-length on the floor, they rose from their seats to assist him, and showed a lively wonder in this strange scene.

"You English people are curious people," said one of them, speaking with a marked foreign accent.

"You must not judge them by this," said Rothschild. "Who is it—let us see if I know him."

Taking hold of Herbert's body, he tried to turn it over to see if he could recognise the face. This he managed to do with some difficulty. He knew it at once.

"Herbert!" he exclaimed in amazement. "This is the most extraordinary thing."

"You know him, then?" said one of his visitors.

"Know him? Of course, I do. He is not only a well-known dealer on the Stock Exchange, but his house is not more than a stone's throw from my own. But, to speak the truth, I had no idea he was this kind of man. The amazing thing is that he should be down here in the city at this time of night. I cannot understand it."

In the meantime, he had been trying to get the inanimate form of the man into a sitting posture,—a process for which he required the help of the housekeeper. But for his sterterous breathing, Herbert might have been dead,—so utterly unconscious was he.

"After all," said Rothschild, "I think I know, perhaps, how this has come about. There are many queer clubs in London—night hawks, ghostly prowlers, and Herbert must belong to one of them. That, no doubt, is it."

Suddenly, even as Rothschild spoke, Herbert seemed to slip out of their hands, the back of his head striking the floor with a dull thud, while his face took on a deep purple hue, and his body stretched out tense and rigid.

Rothschild and his friends were fast becoming

Digitized by Google

seriously alarmed. Herbert's drunken fit now seemed to them likely to end in apoplexy or some sudden seizure, which might have a fatal termination.

"Is there no quiet room to which he can be removed," asked one of the strangers.

"He should be put to bed and a physician sent for," said the other.

"This is the most comfortable room in the house," said Rothschild, "and as you can see for yourselves, it is none too comfortable."

"You are indeed a Spartan," said the man who had spoken first, with a half satirical smile. Rothschild's office was furnished with the utmost simplicity.

"Have you any brandy?" Rothschild now asked of the housekeeper.

Some spirits were brought in a glass, and an attempt was made to force the fluid between Herbert's set teeth, but in vain. Nothing apparently was of the slightest use.

"Perhaps you had better go for a doctor," said Rothschild to the woman.

"Let us try the effect of a bucket of water on him first," she suggested, and without waiting to hear his reply, went off to fetch it. A minute or two later, while Rothschild was apologising to his guests for the unseemly interruption which their business had suffered, she returned, and without more ado soused Herbert well with the water.

At first this drenching did not appear to affect Herbert's condition, but in the course of a short time the patient began to breathe in a more natural manner, and then fell into a somewhat noisy but sound sleep. Two or three rugs and a pillow were brought into the room, and Herbert was made as comfortable as circumstances permitted.

His anxiety for Herbert now being calmed, Rothschild said with a grim smile, "When Herbert comes to himself, and realises where he is, he will never forgive himself."

"That will depend on circumstances," said Herbert to himself under the rugs. "I wish, however, I was not so confoundedly wet."

"Now, señor," said Rothschild pointedly, to the taller of the two men, "I think you can tell me now, as fully as you possibly can, what intelligence you have brought me from Madrid."

In this year of grace, 1822, the famous compact which had bound the Holy Alliance, as it was called, together, was seen to be coming to an end. The British Government had been forced to the conclusion that it could be no party to the Absolutist views which were cherished by the sovereigns of Russia, Austria, Prussia, and France—views which completely rejected all liberal institutions, and were only satisfied by the most thorough-going despotism.

The problem before the Holy Alliance was: What was to be done with Spain and the revolted Spanish colonies in South America?

At this time the Spanish people were far from being well-disposed to their king, Ferdinand, whom Europe sought to impose upon them. They protested that they were entitled to select the form of government that suited them best without any interference on the part of anyone outside their own country. To a certain extent they were backed up in this attitude by Great Britain.

France had called upon the allied monarchs to re-establish the despotism of Ferdinand, and had gone so far as to assemble a considerable army on the slopes of the Pyrenees.

Such was the state of things when the Duke of Wellington was sent as plenipotentiary to the Continental monarchs, and he was frankly told in Paris that 100,000 French troops had been mobilised; one column was to pass into the country through Catalonia, while the other was to march by the great road through Irun upon Madrid.

A week before the time when Rothschild had met his two visitors, the duke had let it be known that he had practically failed in his efforts to keep the French king quiet. He had then gone on to Vienna, where a great congress was expected to be held.

What Rothschild was anxious to know from his Spanish visitors was what the attitude would be of the Spaniards if a French army invaded their country. To his questions on this point he received the reply that the leaders of the revolution were jealous of each other, and that it was tolerably certain that their rivalries would render the work of the French very easy.

He had also brought a letter in cipher from one of Rothschild's most trusted correspondents, who looked after his business in the Peninsula, stating that a French occupation would be a matter of little consequence, as the Spanish people were uneasy and restless, and, on the whole, would prefer a more settled form of government than that they now had.

Rothschild's second visitor was from Paris, and had been sent across the Channel by the brother who was the head of that branch of the Rothschild family.

After some conversation as to the position of affairs in France at the time, it transpired that the French Government had been asking in an informal manner if the Rothschilds would be willing to float a loan for a large sum of money, the understanding being that it was to be used in the Spanish campaign for the restoration of Ferdinand. Otherwise, the French troops would not cross the mountains.

"There will be no loan," said Rothschild shortly, "for any such purpose."

He drew towards him some writing materials, and wrote a brief letter, which he gave to the French courier.

"So far as we are concerned there shall be no war," said Rothschild. "Money is no longer to be made out of war."

As anyone who is acquainted with history must be well aware, what Rothschild said was not fulfilled. Spain was occupied, but that did not take place for a considerable time later, and the circumstances which led the Rothschilds to advance the necessary funds in the end to the French king lie outside the domain of this narrative.

Digitized by Google

For the present the key-note of the occasion was that there was to be no war in Spain. That very morning this would be announced in such a way that confidence would be restored upon the Stock Exchange, and the result would be that, as always happened in such cases, there would be a marked rise in Consols and every other class of security.

Before dismissing his visitors, he sent out to the housekeeper to call a carriage.

"You will drive back to my house," he said to them when it had arrived, "and you will tell my people to go across to my brother-in-law, Montefiore, and ask him to come to me at once. Say the business is most important, and will admit of no delay."

When they had gone, he sat for awhile wrapt in thought. Then, regardless of the sleeping figure, whose presence there he had almost forgotten, he commenced to speak to himself aloud.

"It will be some hours before the Stock Exchange can learn the news I shall give it. If I let it be known after noon, that will be quite time enough. As soon as the Exchange opens, I will have Montefiore and a host of other brokers employed in picking up all the stock they can get without disturbing the market."

He was as calm, as impassive as ever. At this sort of game, he was endlessly proficient. That his gains should be made out of the losses of others disturbed him not in the least. Though he believed himself to be entirely alone, as it was shown by this soliloquy, no one would have marked anything unusual in his demeanour.

After all, he was only using his money and brains against the money and brains of others, who would have only been too glad to have been able to act as he did.

Two or three hours sped away. It was now nearly daylight, and he grew very anxious over the delay of the appearance of his most trusted broker. He reckoned up in his mind the time it should have taken for his message to have been delivered and responded to, and came to the conclusion that some accident had occurred. After waiting a short time longer, he determined to go himself as fast as possible on the way to Stamford Hill, taking the road along which he was sure his brother-in-law must come.

Hardly had the door closed behind Rothschild when Herbert showed some symptoms of recovering. After her master had gone out, the housekeeper entered the room to see how her patient was getting on. She found him sitting up, and, although he still presented a most haggard appearance, he appeared to be coming to himself.

"How do you feel, sir?" she asked.

"Oh, I think I am all right," responded Herbert. "Although I am perfectly distracted with a violent headache. But where am I? What has happened! This is certainly not my own house."

"You are in the office of Mr. Rothschild," she said.

"In Mr. Rothschild's office," he exclaimed. "How did I get here?"

The housekeeper smiled.

"Well, sir, when you came here last night you were hardly aware of what you were doing."

"Oh, I see," he said. "I must have had too much wine at the club last night. I am afraid I have given you a great deal of trouble," and he rose up and stood on his feet. "I must be going," he said, and he handed her a couple of guineas. "Let that pay you for your trouble."

The housekeeper tried to expostulate with him. He really ought to rest a little longer, for he was not well enough to go out. But he was resolved, he said, and presently went out into the street, where the air was so fresh and bracing that not only did he at once lose all signs of his headache, but in a remarkably short space of time had managed also to present something uncommonly like his ordinary appearance.

As he went along he smiled pleasantly to himself. "Never was there such a chance," he said, in his gayest manner. "Rothschild will never forgive me, but if I work matters properly, his forgiveness will not matter a bit to me."

Next he went to an early coffee house, where he made a hearty breakfast. Then he sauntered to the office of his principal broker, who was not a little surprised at so early a visit.

Nor was his surprise less when Herbert gave him instructions to buy as soon as the market had opened an enormous amount of the three and four per cents., as well as an equally large block of Omnium.

"I suppose you know what you are doing?" said the astonished broker. "The market has been very weak for the last two days. You must surely have heard something?"

"You may be quite certain of that," Herbert replied.

The broker did as he was ordered, and by eleven o'clock had fulfilled the whole of Herbert's commissions, and it was just about this time that Herbert met Rothschild, whom he asked satirically, "How are you off for stock?"

When Rothschild's brokers appeared in the market, a heavy rise in Consuls had already taken place, and while their actions, and the favourable news from abroad still further stimulated prices, the advantage lay with Herbert, who was able to sell in the afternoon of the same day the stock he had bought in the morning at a gain of from three to four per cent.

Rothschild never forgave Herbert for what he termed "a base, dishonest, and nefarious stratagem."

Great Cricket Competition

PRIZES OF £1,000, £100, £25.

In *Pearson's Weekly* now on sale appear particulars of a big competition in which the above substantial amounts are offered.

A list of fifteen matches appears, and all you have to do is to indicate which club you consider will win in the same way as the famous *Pearson's Weekly* Football Competitions.

GREAT - WAR - COMPETITION.

FIRST PRIZE - - £5 | **25 Prizes of Handsome Books.**
Five Prizes of £1 each. | **25 Gold-plated Pencil-cases.**

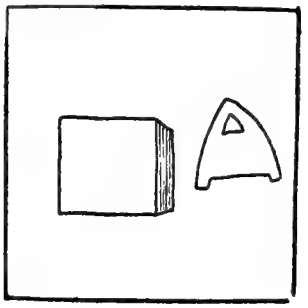
In the event of a tie, the prizes will be awarded at the discretion of the Editor.

SO much interest is at the present moment centred in that part of the world round the unfortunate Island of Cuba, that the competition we have inaugurated, and which starts to-day, should commend itself particularly to readers of *Short Stories*.

Below will be found eight pictures. Each one depicts the name of some place, or ship, or man associated with the combatants. Five sets of these pictures will be published. Write down the names in the spaces provided, and keep all the sets by you until we ask you to send them in.

The daily newspapers will give you the best help in discovering solutions, as most of the names depicted have already appeared in the press.

THIS WILL HELP YOU.

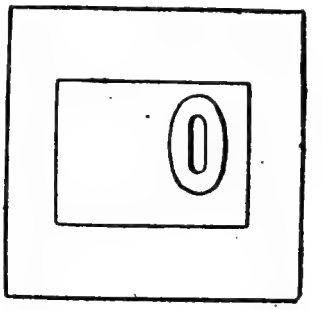


No. 1.—CUBA.

WARSHIP.

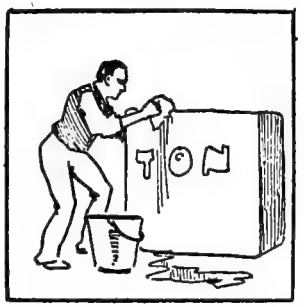
No. 2......

LEADER.



No. 3......

PLACE.



No. 4......

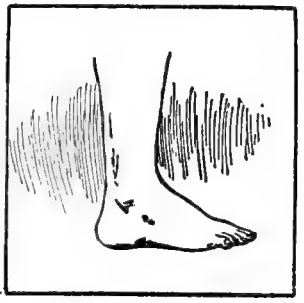
WARSHIP.

No. 5......

LEADER.

No. 6......

WARSHIP



No. 7......

WAR COMPETITION.

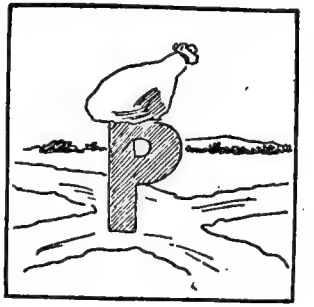
No. 1.

Name.....

Address.....

.....

PLACE.



No. 8......

Digitized by Google

THE EMPRESS OF THE EARTH

THE TALE OF THE YELLOW WAR

BY M. P. SHIEL.

CHAPTER XXVI. (*continued*).

By the time Hardy reached his own ship in No. 98, the three appointed battle-ships were off to the west.

It was just three bells, first dog-watch; and the day, as if lingering to see, showed hardly a tendency to darken. The Allied fleet was now much more distinctly marked on the horizon. The British had quite a stripped appearance, prepared, to its mast-heads, for battle.

As soon as Hardy reached his deck he ordered eight knots to be signalled. And at once the two masses of power began to approach rapidly, growing up upon each other, marching over to the insubstantial deep, to meet.

It is impossible for even the coolest heart to be present at the impending of a contest so august, without a quickened beat, a thump of awe. Even to contemplate the thing from afar is horror. The weak flesh shrinks. The forces that rush to horrid combat are hardly of man,—they stride out into the infinite, they reach the supernatural, they become *ghostly*. Commonplace Jack suddenly finds himself face to face with ineffable Hades.

They are ten miles apart—they are eight—they are six. The heart seems jammed in the dry throat, and the hands shake like reeds through which the huntsman's dog has flitted. The anticipation of the thing is, if possible, a greater horror than the reality.

The five ships have pricked their course off, debouching to port, and the three appointed torpedo-boats are rushing like sword-fish still further to port upon the single doomed ship designated by Hardy. Only the *Royal Sovereign* in the far starboard limb maintains her straight course to eastward. Hardy is in her conning-tower, and his eyes, alight with awe and joy, are everywhere.

Signal after signal goes up from the *Royal Sovereign*. The speeds on both sides intensify. She is five miles from the line of the two ships between which she means to run, and she is the foremost of her own fleet. In two minutes she is four miles; in two more three. How frightful is her Silence. . . . !

If the earth's foot should slip upon its course, and she were perceived to be sailing slowly, yet with ever swifter and madder joy, toward her native sun, just so the wild heart would beat, and the blanched face be pinched. . . .

The ships are no longer mere toys one to the other. They are two miles apart. Hardy waits, grandly patient. They are two thousand yards apart. . . . And then the *Royal Sovereign* talks.

Talks—and is answered. It is a single savage bark of Cerberus, the hell-dog, answered by two single savage Cerberus-barks—the talk of heavy guns. But before the sounds have passed in pallid flight over that sea, there breaks forth a continued rolling row, like that solemn roar of doom and deep-throated jabber of bubbering and thundering Etna, the mere intolerable tumult of which throws the crews into a sort of crazy daze. It is the lighter guns which chatter.

John Hardy forgets Yen How and his tortures. He is a youth again. A wild hilarity lights his gallant eyes.

But now he is passing midway between the two ships, and straight before him is the third. Not an instant of that precious period passes unmarked by him. Though his face, like all faces there, is the face of a madman, the back of his brain is cool as ice.

"Plenty of quick thunder," he had said—in his robust, Cromwellian way! And as he passed by her, the great *Brennus* reeled and plunged, with a sort of haste, from sight.

But now all the battle, over many a mile of troubled sea, is rolled in smoke; and nimble-treading clouds pass in mysterious haste to and fro across the water. From fifteen miles away to northward there comes a great detonation, and the *Italia* is "in the air." The three torpedo-boats detailed to attack her have been sunk, but the sixth steel-needle waits half a minute swinging between her screws, and bursts, and sends her—flying.

Near by, Lord Beresford on the *Anson*, has rammed the *Lepanto* at a triangle-apex, and run on with sinking bows toward the *Amiral Duperré* and the *Oldenburg;* and these two he passes with such a rain of wrath that not a single crew is left alive at their unprotected guns.

Now, if never before, is proved the truth of Hardy's saying, that the modern battleship is a destructive, rather than a self-protective, engine. Even as he gasps the sharp, short order "Ram!" the two masses of white cloud, within which are the *Royal Sovereign* and the *Francisco Morosimi* coalesce; they are both tearing along at fifteen knots, in nearly opposite directions; they close—they meet; and there is nothing on earth to which to liken the shocking jar with which those armoured powers crash.

On both ships every living brain spins and faints; and before any one has recovered consciousness, the *Francisco Morosimi* is wheeling furiously in a hollow basin of sea, whose waters shoot and gurgle in cataracts above her leaning hull.

All along the line of fifteen miles, from the *Italia* "in the air" to the *Francisco Morosimi* in the deep, the tale of tragedy has accumulated; and in three minutes the charge is over, and the ships are firing stern-guns.

Only three minutes—and at the end of that time, one British battle-ship, the *Illustrious*, and four foreign battle-ships, the *Italia*, the *Francisco Morosimi*, the *Lepanto*, and the Admiral-ship, are no longer there; seven minutes later, and nine more foreign battle-ships, with three more British, sink, without receiving any further injuries. Some of the crews of these last are afloat in boats.

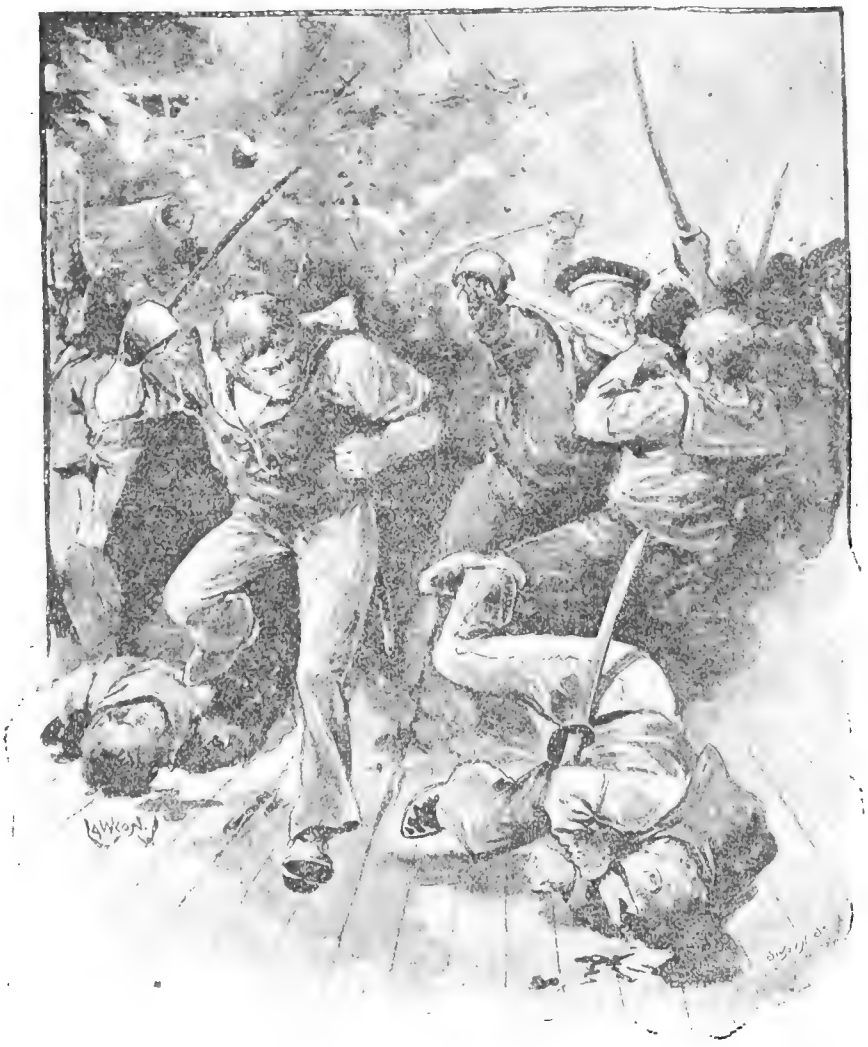
Two of the six British ships in tatters, and six of the

Digitized by Google

enemy in tatters, still float. John Hardy slowly opens his eyes, leaps to his feet, looks round, and orders his helm to be put to starboard, for there is a wide clear space about him. He is told, in reply, that it is impossible to keep steam, as the water is rising in the stoke-holds.

This only means that he cannot ram again, not that the fight is quite over for him. The *Royal Sovereign* creeps wearily round; yonder to the northwest is a still reeking ship, the *Sfax*, apparently hardly moving; and like a dying lion, intent upon dealing a last rent to his enemy, the *Royal Sovereign*, trailing her wounded stern, drags herself painfully forward upon the *Sfax*.

The ships are alone, and the combat, dreadful because almost stationary, lasts five minutes. Neither is fit for fight, yet neither will strike colours. The rain of shells clash midway in the air, and burst in unison, as if with clapping hands, and grand hurrahs of flame and sound. The ships are near, and suddenly Hardy cries: "Helm hard to port—hands prepare to board!" And as the *Sfax* discharges a last broadside at nothingness, the high bow of the *Royal Sovereign* creeps forward upon the quarter of the *Sfax*, there is a small crash and mutual shudder of the meeting ships, and the next moment, Jack, with Hardy at his head, is swarming, cutlass in hand, with nimble impetuosity, into the enemy's aft upper-deck. The feat is unexpected; the Frenchmen wince and die; in a moment the British tar is everywhere, and his touch is rough. A white-faced commodore rushes past Hardy on the main-deck, crying: "We yield! we yield!"



Swarming, cutlass in hand, with nimble impetuosity, into the enemy's aft upper-deck.

The stern of the *Sfax* sways and wobbles a little. She feels the suction of the *Royal Sovereign*, which has quietly sunk beside her.

Hardy stills the tumult, orders the French flag to be pulled down, and leaps to the conning-tower. He looks abroad with keenly curious eyes over the sea. Around him is a great dull roar, and the air is all of thin smoke. No human brain can now fully divine, much less direct, the vast drama that is still progressing. Far away, beyond the ken of vision, the battle is raging between meeting cruisers, between torpedoes and contre-torpilleurs, between shot and shell, ram and barbette, in incalculable hurly-burly. But through all this confusion there has run, and runs, a thread of plan, on at least one side. Hardy, as far as he can see, is well content.

He waits and waits, with wildly throbbing heart, for the appearance of his three battle-ships.

As for himself, he is a prisoner. The *Sfax* has neither screw, nor rudder, nor boat.

At last they come, hurrying from the eastward, where they have been delayed by sinking the greater part of the enemy's troopships—in line abreast.

Hardy's signalman has been busy among the French flags, and when they approach within a thousand yards of the *Sfax*, summoned by steam-syren, he signals them to destroy, or capture, the five dismantled battle-ships which remain.

And with this order the battle is nearly over: the mere apparition of the fresh ships has all but won it. There is a renewed energy of firing which lasts from four to five minutes.

And then a gradual, and finally deathly silence grows upon the dun air, and the callous green sea-surface; and night at last descends.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XXVII.

The Yellow Danger.

We, writing the history, have gone into detail, and explained the means employed by Hardy in the winning of this great battle.. But the mass of the British public, not looking narrowly into means, looking only at the astonishing result, hailed the victory as a perplexing miracle of genius.

That even one of the British ships should return to harbour was marvellous. But that three should return, having in tow two Italian and one French ship, after destroying the whole overwhelming remainder of the invading force, this seemed to approach the incredible.

The three ships arrived at Portsmouth at eleven in the night. They were the *Nile*, the *Hero*, and a sloop, the *Pelican*. (The *Benbow*, the third of the ships kept by Hardy in reserve, had been torpedoed at the last moment.) They had on board, beside their own crews, Lord Beresford, Hardy, and a number of boatloads of British and foreign sailors which they had picked up. The three captured ships—the *Sfax*, and two Italian gun-boats, all disabled—were towed to Newhaven, and left. The three British, almost intact (the *Hero* had some central-battery guns unshipped) proceeded to Portsmouth.

At midnight there was a sound of jubilee bells in London, in Liverpool, and in every considerable town in Britain. Watch-night processions, which showed no intention of going to bed, filled the streets; and penniless Hodge at the door of the village ale-house heard a rumour, and was glad.

Better times would come now; hard Scarcity and dreary outlook would be no more; the great war was over; and the True Blue had won it.

But the real case was fearfully different. The war just practically ended was a preliminary: it was the first-piece comedietta before the tragedy, and it was put upon the stage by a great actor in order the better to set off his own grandiose strutting and storming. It was the streak of foam which fore-runs the tidal-wave.

If ever a man had a day of strain and toil it was John Hardy that day; with every breath his chest whcezed in labour; when he landed at Portsmouth at eleven, his hands hung so heavy that he could hardly stir them. His voice was gone. The sound of thunder still rang in his ears.

Yet, even while preparations were being made for a train to conduct him to London, he wrote, and had sent off, a telegram. It was to the editor of the *Times*. It said:

> Kindly reserve two columns for letter from me for to-morrow. Will let you have manuscript by three a.m.
>
> John Hardy.

At this message Printing House Square rubbed its tickled hands, and was prone to dance. The editorial head grew dizzy with big anticipation. For copy at that moment from John Hardy, two columns of it, was copy indeed—and gratis! It seemed too exquisite a thing to be true.

"But what can it be all about?" wondered the editor.

"A thrilling description of the battle!" suggested an inspired sub.

"Hardly that, perhaps," doubted the Chief.

One of the staff waited in Cavendish Square, which till far into the morning was filled by an upper-class crowd. A little before three the *Times* man drove from Hardy's door with the precious copy written in pencil; and not till then did Hardy's head drop asleep on the table where he had sat; part of the copy he had scribbled in the train with half-closed eyes.

The letter contained no thrilling description of the battle; though it was thrilling enough, too, and made the *Times* editor rub his eyes in a somewhat unusual way.

Was the letter a stupendous hoax? Or was it a letter, the publication of which would lift the *Times* to a greater pitch of glory than was ever dreamt of by human editor in this world before?

The *Times* man was questioned narrowly. From whom had he received the letter? From Hardy's old butler himself. There could be no mistake.

It appeared next morning, side by side with the detailed description of the battle. And England rubbed its eyes, too, as the *Times* editor had rubbed his.

Hardy had spoken out clearly, careless, in his belief in the British character, whether he threw the nation into a state of panic or not. He told what was coming; he explained the motive with which the European war had been brought about by Yen How; he told of the massacre, of the action of the Japanese fleet; he showed how there was not even the least possible chance for Europe; how England alone, for a time at least, was sheltered by her sea; and how this was the chance of England to come forward and prove her patriarchal heart, her imperial clemency, her motherhood of the world. He gave his reasons for thinking that the fulfilment of his prophecy was near, impending, about to happen. And he wound up with a series of numbered skeleton recommendations. They were:

1. That the tiny remainder of the British fleet be utilised to seize all the merchant-ships in European ports; and that these ships, together with all the available ships in the British mercantile marine, be employed, with or without the consent of foreign governments or individual owners, in bringing over to England, and in taking to America, and to Africa, such of the inhabitants of Europe as could and would seek shelter in those countries.
2. That America be invited to a League with Britain, having for its object the salvation of the white races, and the extermination of the yellow.
3. That the armies of Britain be at once recalled from the Continent.
4. That the Government at once begin to make all possible provision for the huge increase of population in Britain which would result on the appearance in Europe of the yellow men.

Such were the *Times* two-columns, and under the last was the name John Hardy.

Of the sensation which this letter caused it is impossible to give a real idea, for there is nothing else to which to compare it. By noon copies of the paper were being bought and sold for ten guineas.

At this hour thanksgiving hymns were being sung; and the name of Hardy was being made the text of a thousand sermons.

After the battle of Shorcham, he had been instinctively adopted by the race as its "darling;" the battle of the Channel made him definitely its hero; his letter made him its Leader.

He was at once elected a member of the Permanent Committee of National Safety.

Not that there was no searching of heart, no doubting, as to this extraordinary letter. To many people it seemed as wild as possible. All the proof which Hardy could adduce to shew that the Yellow Wave was near (if it was coming at all) was his contention that Yen How, having destroyed Europe by the European war, would not be silly enough to wait for Europe to recover herself before his invasion. The argument was sound, if the hypothesis was sound. But where were the signs of his coming? There was an "if."

On the whole, however, the nation had learnt to trust him; and trusting him, it stood aghast at his awful message.

At this time, the people of Britain, if they had never been so before, was genuinely a Nation, as distinct from a mob. They had suffered keenly together, resolved and acted nobly together: and they had been welded in the furnace-heat. By a Nation we mean a multifold Man. It was remarkable, about this period, how large an amount of attention was attracted by certain badly-spelt letters written to the papers. Each man felt himself verily part of the whole, and "the government was upon his shoulders."

Digitized by Google

It was no longer a nation of shop-keepers—it was a nation of Councillors. "To be made perfect by suffering" is even more true of communities than of individuals. "Happy," it is said, "is the nation which has no history"—but "nation" in that phrase should be spelt "crowd." It is the Marathons and Trafalgars which knit and nationalise. At all events, Britain, now, with her largely decreased population, was certainly knit and nationalised. She could proceed from thought to action almost with the spontaneity of a single brain and arm. In her hand was the sword, but upon her brow sat Deliberation, and the grave air of the Statesman.

This was all the more, and not the less reason why Hardy's announcements should be followed by the wildest

Laden with booty.

dismay, the most unalloyed panic. For Britain, and every Briton, felt that it was England, in the end, who would have to dam the yellow wave, or sink beneath it; that it was she, and she alone, who must needs take up the cross of the world, and, like the Christ of the nations, with many an agony and bloody sweat, redeem mankind.

Whatever else was true or false in Hardy's letter, this, it was clear, was true: that, in the event of the yellow wave, Continental Europe was powerless.

When there would be no eye to pity, and no arm to save, it must, then, be the arm of Britain which should bring salvation. And *was it able . . .?*

There was the fleet of Japan, the fleet of China. And if even there were not the fleet of Japan, neither was there any longer a British fleet at all capable of opposing the landing, even in open boats, of an endless succession of innumerable armies on various parts of the coast.

These reflections at once occurred to everyone. And they had the same effect upon the mind, as if it had been scientifically announced that some fatal change was about to occur in the composition of the atmosphere of the earth.

It was felt, of course, that the yellow conquest could not be an ordinary conquest, if it happened at all. There was no question of conqueror and conquered living together afterwards and fraternizing, like Norman and Saxon. The yellow conquest meant, naturally, that wherever it passed, the very memory of the white races it encountered would disappear for ever.

At this dark thought, the heart quailed: and there was Panic.

And at five o'clock of the day of the *Times* two-columns, the *Pall Mall Gazette* came out with the following:

"*(From Our Own Correspondent.)*

"New York.—The *New York Evening Post* publishes to-day the report that a body of Thibetans (?) has seized the Russian railway between Kokand and Krasnovodsk, together with the partially-dismantled fortress at Samarkand, and have finally appeared at the east bank of the Caspian. Their number, probably amounting to ten or fifteen thousand, has not been definitely ascertained. The rumour originates, I understand, from an *Evening Post* correspondent at Astrakhan, and comes *vid* Odessa and Paris."

This item of news, meagre as it was, was enough for Britain. At once everyone jumped at the right conclusion. Here, it was agreed, were "the signs of his coming"—the first!

As when a sudden comet lowers near the earth, terrifying the heart of kings, prophesying Change to the nations, and shaking pestilence from her "horrid hair"—so, with its growing certainty, did the British nation cower at the dread future. Someone rediscovered the telegram about the 500 Chinese at Petersburg, and noised it abroad afresh. The bleak and dismal sky lowered darkly.

At twilight the Prime Minister was sitting by John Hardy's bed-side, which two physicians had just left.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

The Three Gospels.

About the time when the three important personages met at the inn, in the wood near Liège, Dr. Yen How was deep in study from morning to night. On the table before him, all round his feet, overflowing upon every article of furniture in the apartment, were maps, general maps, local maps, special maps, survey maps. He had a goodly wide brain, and every village in Europe, its position, its name, its population, and every stream, and fort, and railway, and town, was climbing into that brain, one after the other, with the intention of staying there. And when he was finished, he knew how Nature had made Europe, and how man had made it, and what was in it.

He knew also Asia.

While he was still pondering his maps, China was already far on its march. The seizure of the railway-line by "Thibetans" (?), reported in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, had taken place four weeks before the news reached New York. The British army of India, afterwards annihilated in Russia, had passed that way, and left an easy task for the yellow pioneers.

Even before this, China had begun to flow westward. Yen How had found her a frozen stream; and like a frozen stream when the sun shines strongly, she had moved at last under his steady heat, slowly, in trickling rivulets, long before the crash of the dripping ice and the billowing broad rush of the torrent.

Having waked China by the methods we have described, how did he effect this irresistible Western tendency, so mighty in its impulse that an arm a million times stronger than Yen How's could not have checked it, had he willed?

He did it by preaching, with the inspiration of Confucius, only with a far greater success than Confucius, his three gospels of Greed, of Race, and of Cruelty.

And in doing so, he remembered the density of the skull which he had to inspire with ideas; he was not preaching even to Russian moujiks, but to men slower still of understanding. To plough a fact into their brains, he knew that he must plough hard. But he was quite equal to this. With his usual thoroughness he said: "A hundred ways: and of these *one* will not fail." At all events he had chosen

the doctrines to teach which the Chinese were most apt to learn, and had, in fact, already been taught by nature. And herein lay his chief wisdom.

Just when the pressure of the new taxation crushed heaviest upon the penurious poor of China, he collected an army of 400,000, composed of men taken from each of the regiments into which all the land of the Mongols was now divided; and this force he hurled in two divisions across the Si-Kiang against Annam, the ancient antagonist of China, and Burma. The horrors perpetrated in these atrocious, and totally unexpected raids, could not be described; a great massacre resulted, and the army amassed hoards of spoil, gathered from many a Buddhist *vihára* and jewelled palace-gate. And immediately on its return, the individuals who composed it were redrafted, laden with booty, to their former districts, to spread through every village in China fairy-tales of gore and gold in foreign lands.

There was not, moreover, a drill-sergeant of the remotest squad of conscripts who did not become a missionary of Yen How, preaching for him the three glad tidings of Hades.

Many Chinese did not know that there was any other land than China, nor had, till the Massacre, seen a white man, nor known that there were such things as white men.

Now they heard and the astonished ear was charmed.

Could it be that beyond that land of pinched Scarcity which they knew, there was *Another*, in which feeble, pretty creatures, resembling real men, lived in rose-beds, and threw to one another balls of gold, and made love on couches of eider-down and ivory? And if not, what was this rumour, this tidings of good, coming strangely from afar, this new talk? And this new holiday of blood, and this new drilling, after four thousand years? And this new Movement, and this new stirring of sap in the old, dead tree-trunk after the long, long, changeless Winter? Surely the seasons return! and *by wondrous miracle* leaves are again on the branches, and all is new! There *is*, then, Spring and Joy in the world? and not utter, ugly Woe—four thousand years of age? Gold?—and frail, white limbs to be torn apart?—and the blood of luxurious kings to be quaffed by thirsty Chinamen in carved goblets of alabaster?—and cushions of embroidered silk hanging in plenty for all among the lazy, rotting melons on the far-off trees?

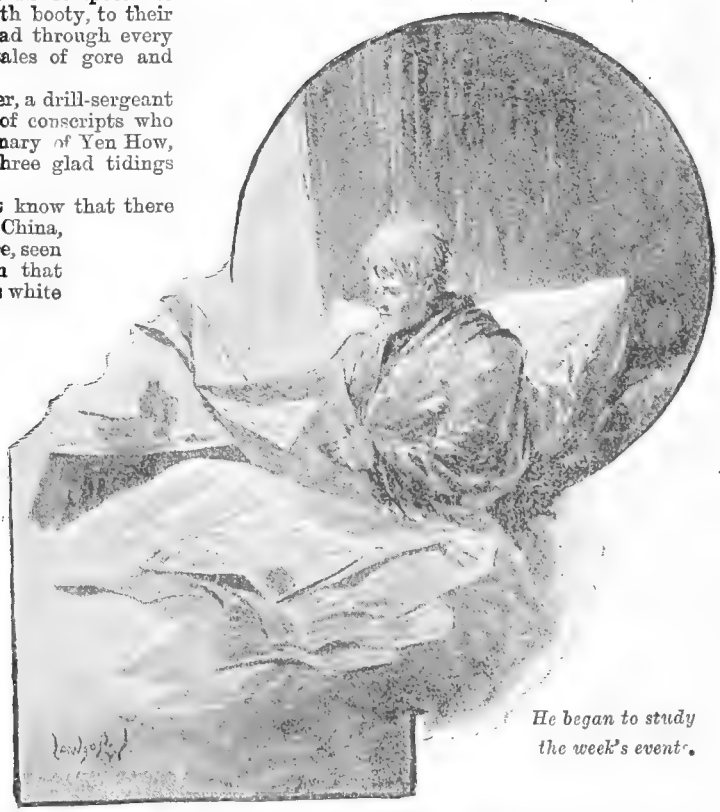
Far into the dreamiest wilds of savage China, Mongolia, Thibet, came this message of blessedness, this New Religion of lust. And every citizen became a convert, and every convert a zealot, and every zealot an apostle.

And the more intolerable Yen How made China for them with burden, and drill, and tax, the louder and deeper swelled their cry to be led forthwith into this promised land of plenty afar.

In the commentaries of Cæsar we read of whole communities packing, as it were, their trunks, leaving their own land, and migrating in a body to some new territory. It was this strange, wandering tendency which now possessed the Mongolian race; but instead of a tribe or community on the march, the stars were to look down and behold a nomad Empire.

This weird and, indeed, awful spectacle, Destiny had held concealed in her womb; for this, too, was to be one of the acts in the drama of Man; and in the fulness of time it was evolved, and seen.

But no one knew better than Dr. Yen How that the Mongolian race in its passage across the old world would meet with obstacle and pain—the weariness of the march, the day's hunger, the fight in the street, the rain of shot and shell at Metz, and Königsberg, and Paris, and Dover; as for the Japanese section of the race, they knew that Greed and Cruelty alone were incentives sufficient to provide a steady impulse to their native firmness and valour; but as for the Continental section of it, he decided to hurl them forward by an added impulse—the excitation of the instinct of Race.



He began to study the week's event.

In China this instinct took, always, a religious form. And hence Yen How had skilfully contrived to invest his Massacre with something of the solemnity of a Rite. In the cities round the coast, where the white man had long been known, and abominated, the massacre gave an impetus to racial animus, which perhaps was capable of no further fury; but, in addition, he planned for China on the whole a religious mania in connection with this very race instinct, which he counted upon to inspire it in the direction he willed with the frenzy of the Crusader.

The religion of China consisted in the worship of their dead; and this worship took the form also of the worship of the living, whenever the living happened to be a reincarnation of the dead. On this point Buddhism and Confucianism were at one: the belief in reincarnation.

The living were reincarnations of the dead when they were either proclaimed to be so by the priests, or when they were proclaimed to be so by the Emperor, or—when they could work miracles.

Now, Yen How could work the most astounding miracles; and he was proclaimed by the Emperor, and he was proclaimed all over China by the priests, to be the reincarnation of a dead man. And the dead man of whom he was proclaimed to be the reincarnation was—Confucius.

To begin with, he was made a Saint.

Then (at about the time when John Hardy joined the Englishmen at Kiao-chau) began a remarkable triumphant passage through China of this great man and his enormous Court of dignitaries, when, in a grand religious festival,

lasting by Imperial Decree through a month, Yen How was presented and hailed in temple and at praying-mill, from Pekin to Lhassa, as the Heaven-descended Leader of the only Race, come back, according to old promise, to lead them to the conquest and fruition of the world. His progress was attended with more than imperial pomp; he was raised high on a throne of royal splendour, and exhibited to the muttering and kneeling people; the dazzled eye admitted him a god.

If in some mountain-dell of remotest China there had dwelt some benighted peasant who had never yet heard the name of Yen How, the ruler, the driller, the oppressor, there was certainly not one now who did not know of Yen How, the Reincarnate, the bringer of glad tidings, the Head of his People.

Confucius was China; and Yen How was Confucius. He stood for the Race.

Thus did he centre in his own Person the whole race-instinct and race-religion of the land. He associated the new creed of lust with the old of superstition; and of both he was the embodiment and Prophet.

He knew that principles must centre in a Person before they can lead nations by the nose, and fire them to heroism and martyrdom. No stirring Mahomedanism without Mahomet, and no strong Christianity without Christ. But in thus making himself the sole guide and motive-power, the one centre of adoration and trust, to the whole people, he went a step too far; he committed an error in tactics; he did not take into account every contingency.

For if the shepherd chance to perish, what will become of the sheep?

This was the very question which John Hardy, with his sure eye for the main fact among ten thousand, asked himself:

"If the shepherd chance to perish . . . ?"

At all events, it was the shepherd with which he, personally, had mainly to do. Between him and Yen How was the tug of war; and he knew it.

So, as he lay among his pillows, almost as white as they, a week after the battle in the channel, he called old Bobbie to him, and said:

"Bobbie, do you know anything about British regiments and the dress they wear?"

"Not much, I am afraid, Master John," answered Bobbie.

"Well, then, you will find out, please, and as soon as possible—to-day. I want to know what regiment it is whose privates wear——" and he frowned in an effort of recollection—"wear a scarlet uniform with white facings, and have somewhere about them a Prince of Wales' plume, and a Coronet. Yes, that is it. Please find out; and whether they are still in existence, and all about them."

The old servant bowed and went away. In his eyes now there was a perpetual look of wonder and reproach. The colour and taste of the world was changed to him; someone had meddled with his heart's delight; Hardy had come back, but the dazed old fellow could not find him.

Hardy was now recovering from an attack of asthma which had brought him near to death. When he opened his eyes to renewed care and thought, he had lost a week. The Chinese were now in Europe.

He put out his thin hand and languidly lifted a Times, and he saw the words: "The Yellow Terror," and his hand fell helplessly; and presently he lifted the paper again, and he glanced at another place, and saw the words: "It is *this scream of the Chinese* which seems to inspire their victims with some indefinable new species of terror, never before . . .;" and his hand fell again.

But already, by the next morning, he could sit up in bed to drink his cordial, and then he began to study the week's events. His vitality was in reality intense and tough, and the single thread by which he clung to life a strong one. He set to work to gather facts, and he could work stoutly.

While the pile of papers was still about him, old Bobbie hobbled into the chamber.

"This, I think, Master John, is the name of the regiment you want," said the old man, handing a slip of paper.

On the paper was written:

"The Duke of Cambridge's Own (Middlesex Regiment). Regimental Dist.: No. 57— Hounslow."

"Well, Bobbie, and what about them?" asked Hardy.

"The Depôt of the Regiment is Hounslow, Master John; and their late history is this: the first line battalion was in India at the beginning of the year, and the second line battalion was drafted from South Africa to join them a month after the commencement of the war. Both of these, as far as is known, have been destroyed in Russia. The 3rd and 4th (Militia) battalions have been fighting in North Germany, and seem to be no longer in existence, except for some few now in hospital at Chelsea, sir."

"And have you found out the names of those?"

"No, Master John."

"Then do so at once."

He went on reading. The actual details in the papers had about them a certain indefiniteness, and they were not voluminous; but he was quickly able to determine that the Chinese avalanche was pouring in four main streams.

(To be continued.)

RESULT OF "BOOK" COMPETITION FOR WEEK ENDING APRIL 23rd.

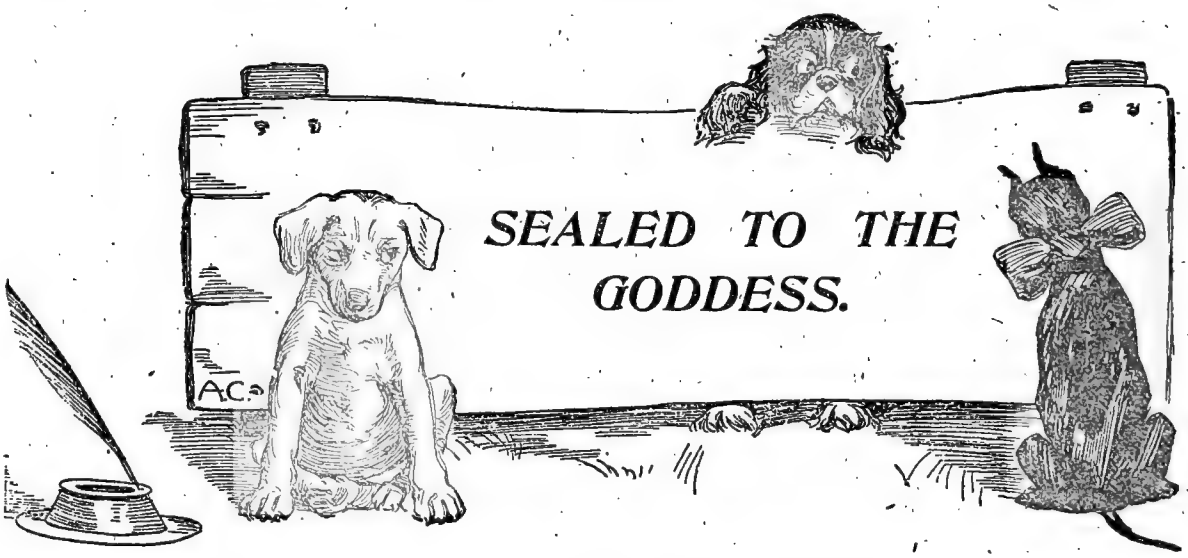
G. B. Hall, The Chantry, Ely. "Twenty-thousand Leagues Under the Sea." By Jules Verne.
H. C. Khyler, 95 Cedar Grove, Lodge Lane, Liverpool. "The Student's English Dictionary."
George Jenkins, Dafen House, Dafen, Llanelly, South Wales. "Cowham's School Method."
L. Albott, 10 Lindal Road, Crofton Park, Brockley, S.E. "Condemned as a Nihilist."
Miss Davison, 34 Lodge Road, The Avenue, Southampton. "Lord Oakburn's Daughters." By Mrs. Henry Wood.
E. Quayle, 33 Warner Street, Barnsbury, N. "Sign of the Cross." By Wilson Barrett.

RESULT OF "VERSELET" COMPETITION.

The winner of the £1 1s. in this competition is L. W. Judd, 2 Alfred Villas, Stanton Road, Barnes.

To the following twenty-five books have been forwarded:

J. E. Hehir, 149 Upper Lewis Road, Brighton.
W. T. M. Wallet, 1 Crescent, Minories, E.C., London.
W. E. Gould, 61 Gibraltor Walk, Bethnal Green, E.
Miss E. Malone, Lissadele, Sligo, Ireland.
A. Lees, Central Board School, Normanton, Yorks.
J. T. Cricks, 121 Sebert Road, Forest Gate, E.
R. Lawson, 12 Buccleuch Place, Edinburgh.
B. Croft, St. Margaret's Bury, Ware, Herts.
Miss Adams, 1 Camden Gardens, Shepherd's Bush.
W. G. H. Cable, 1 Gloucester Place, Greenwich, S.E.
F. Bradburn, 80 Brewery Road, Plumstead, S.E.
Miss B. Price, 266 Victoria Park Road, N.E.
H. Dolling, 57 Lower Clapton Road, Clapton, N.E.
D. O. Neill, 7 Stow Hill, Newport, Mon.
E. C. Thompson, 31 Pearcroft Road, Leytonstone, E.
W. Parker, 13 Cottage Row, St. James' Square, Hull.
A. W. Law, 261 Lavender Hill, Clapham Junction, S.W.
M. J. Borrows, 85 Regent's Road, Great Yarmouth.
Jessie Marriott-Hodgkins, 6 Leighton Mansions, Queen's Club Gardens, West Kensington.
H. C. Smith, 40 Vernon Street, Liverpool.
Mrs. Barrington, Kirk Langley, Derby.
Mary Oades, 26 Summers Town, Lower Tooting, S.W.
W. Shipway, 32 Howard Street, Reading.
E. Jenkins, 4 Hartington Road, Southend-on-Sea, Essex.
H. Howe, 3 Iverson Road, Brondesbury, N.W.



SEALED TO THE GODDESS.

It was Colonel Somers who told the story, prefacing it with the remark that he had no explanations to offer, therefore it would be useless to ask questions.

"At Burrampore," began the Colonel, "where I was stationed in 1860, I made the acquaintance of a smart young civilian of about five and thirty, who, under the old 'Compannee' had held a post of considerable trust in the Police Department. For his services during the Mutiny the Calcutta people had appointed him Deputy Commissioner.

"I will call him Baker; that was not his name, but Baker will do as well as another.

"On both sides of the Service, it was a matter of common report that Baker, disguised as a native, had been present at certain Hindoo ceremonies to which none but Brahmins are supposed ever to gain admittance.

"The man was perfectly fearless. There was nothing that Baker would not dare, to add another item to his continually growing stock of 'native' information.

"Some of the fellows, however, didn't conceal their opinion that some day Baker would go 'a bit too far.' He'll get 'bogged,' they said, and the Service will 'lose a good man for a foolish fancy.' But nobody ever hinted that in his official capacity Baker had shewn himself other than a thoroughly practical Englishman, who had come into closer contact with the daily life of the people than the rest of us.

"I had been at Burrampore for the most part of two years. It was September; the great festival of the Doorga-pooja was being held. Going through the bazaar I stopped to listen to some ballad singers who were chanting the praises of Vishnoo and Krishna.

"At the close of their performance, a tall, muscular-looking Brahmin stepped into the circle. He was naked to the waist, round his loins he wore only a cloth, at his feet stood a basket, and in his right hand he held a small brass bowl. The trident traced in red upon his forehead proclaimed him a votary of Kali—the sanguinary goddess.

"Opening his lips, he invoked the blessing of Mother Durga.

"At the first notes of the invocation, two snakes crept out of the basket, and wound themselves about the bare brown legs. At the close, dipping his finger in the bowl, he pressed it against his forehead, leaving there a bright scarlet stain; and taking one of his pets in each sinewy hand, held them to the place, while the reptiles licked away the blood with a rapid movement of their tongues. Replacing the snakes in the basket, he drew himself proudly up, his eyes glowing with unholy fire; and, shouting '*Joy Kali!*' * proceeded to recite a passage from the Mahabharut.

"It was not till some minutes after I had left the crowd that I found I had an impression that Commissioner Baker was amongst the group of natives immediately facing the performer. I had not seen Baker. As a matter of fact I had *seen* no one—only the Brahmin, whose eyes flamed and flashed in a way that uncomfortably suggested the infernal.

"Why, then, should I have this feeling about Baker?

"The thing stuck in my mind, and I determined to ask Baker over our game of chess in the evening if he had heard the strange Brahmin reciting in the bazaar.

"It was nearly a month, however, before I had a chance of putting the question.

"The Commissioner had been called away suddenly to Ajmeer, and went off immediately after early breakfast. This 'thickened the gruel' certainly. I had no doubt whatever that Baker had been one of the audience in front of the Brahmin.

"The thing which puzzled me was that I should have the sense of his presence without the accompanying idea that I had seen him.

"However, it was not a thing to 'mag' about, and before the end of the month Baker was back.

"At our first meeting I was 'mum.' I wanted to see if Baker would give me a 'lead.' But he didn't—so, on the next occasion, we being alone, I remarked: 'By the way, Baker, there was a strange fellow reciting in the bazaar during the Doorga-pooja—a fellow with the most wonderful eyes and a voice like a flute. I wish you could have heard him.'

"He looked at me, I thought, in a peculiar sort of way, and observed quietly, 'Why do you say that, Somers? You know that I heard him.'

* Victory to Kali.

Digitized by Google

"I tried to speak but could only stammer; the queer light in his eyes confused me. It was the first time I had noticed it there. He repeated the question with more insistence, keeping his eyes bent on me in that peculiar way in which I saw the glint I had seen in those of the Brahmin. The pupils seemed actually to become luminous and to glow with a fire that was not earthly. I remembered the queer tales which were told of Baker, and, at that moment believed them—every one.

"'You know that I was amongst the rabble in front of the man!' he insisted.

"'Well, I have that impression, certainly,' I answered. 'But where I got it I don't know. I'll swear that I never saw you.'

"He laughed, and the unnatural light in his eyes went slowly out.

"'If you had,' he said. 'I should have been food for the vultures before morning.'

"'And—how?' I queried.

"He took another cheroot, and lying back in his long lounging chair, smoked in silence for several minutes.

"'You'll think me a fool, I suppose, Somers,' said he speaking at last, 'and, I'm not so sure that you wouldn't do right to call me one. Of course, what I shall tell you, old man, is between ourselves.

"'With a view to utilising the knowledge in the interest of the Department, I have ventured to cross the boundary at several points.'

"'I thought that was no secret,' I remarked, as he came to a pause.

"He smiled.

"'Hitherto, my friend, the danger has always been personal; but a change in the circumstances may possibly bring about a change of contingencies. You don't catch my meaning, p'r'aps?'

"'No, I don't,' said I, not liking the turn the conversation was taking.

"'Well,' he returned, 'it'll be clear enough presently. For some little time now, I have been making a study of the darkest side of Hindoo mysticism and Oriental superstition. I've learnt many a trick from Mahomedan fakirs and Hindoo jogees—the one I practised upon you in the bazaar amongst others.'

"'That was a trick, was it?' I said, looking at my companion curiously.

"'Well, it was this way. From a clever scoundrel amongst the Baharuppas, I learnt the art of projecting myself across another person's mental vision—by no means a difficult trick when you've learnt it. It does not require much more than a concentration of will. A man at Calcutta, who has acquired the power, can project to Bombay a mental image of himself or a distinct impression of his presence without the counterfeit presentment—provided his volition be sufficiently strong. It depends on the strength of the will current.'

"I suppose I must have looked incredulous, for he added quickly: 'Old Nynee Lal, my dear fellow, who taught me, could do a thing that would make this business shrink to very small dimensions. And that bazaar Brahmin—he belongs to a caste which claims to control the will and determine the actions, even to the doing of deeds which men shall tremble to hear.'

"'But, surely,' I began, 'you don't——'

"'——Say, yea, or nay,' he struck in. 'But the mental impression which I was able to fix upon you under the simplest conditions was a bit of mere apprentice work compared with what I have witnessed. Trickery, illusion, deception, of course. Well, I can't prove it, and that's what irks me.'

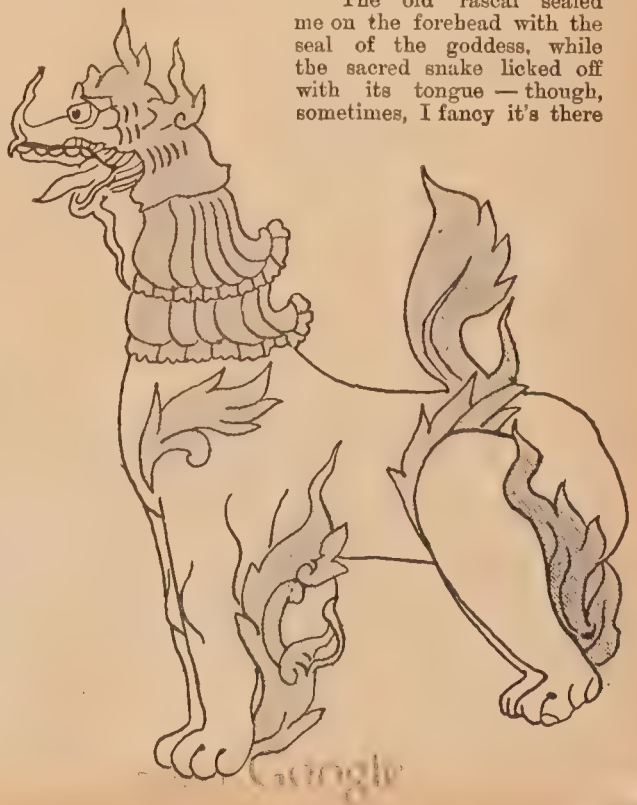
"'You must have had some object, I suppose,' said I, 'in desiring to impress me with the fact of your presence in the crowd?'

"'I had,' was the answer, 'and a very practical one, too. Lal Singh, the Brahmin, is a priest of Kali, serving the chief temple of that amiable goddess at Benares. I heard that he would be at the Doorga-pooja, and determined to seize the opportunity to learn, if possible, a few of the secrets of esoteric Sivaism. The worship of Mother Durga demands many a victim, and I've good warrant for saying that the blood which flows is not always that of "bulls and goats." I can pass anywhere as a native, and had arranged through Nynee for initiation; but Lal Singh has eyes like needle-points—they go through one, and as I looked at the man who was to perform the ceremony, a curious, uneasy sort of feeling crept over me. Vowed to Kali, he would think no more of plunging his knife into me on occasion, than I of shooting a bustard.

"'Seeing you in the crowd, it occured to me that in case of "accident" it might be as well for you to carry away the impression that I had been in the bazaar.

"'The business, however, passed off without "accident." I won't describe the ritual; I thought I was pretty well hardened; but it made the flesh creep on my bones. I wouldn't go through it again to learn the dearest secret in Mother Nature's bosom. There was no human sacrifice. The horrible Shaktee ceremonies are never performed upon initiation. But the place looked like a slaughter-house and smelt like a shambles. A bowl of warm blood stood on the altar and the image itself was splashed with it from head to foot.

"'The old rascal sealed me on the forehead with the seal of the goddess, while the sacred snake licked off with its tongue — though, sometimes, I fancy it's there



still under the skin. This pretty thing,—' opening his shirt-front, he displayed a queer-shaped, black-looking stone. It had five faces and on each face was carved the device of Kali. It was attached to a Brahminical thread which he wore round his neck.

"'This pretty thing, inscribed with Kali's seal in her favourite vermilion, I got in exchange for three rupees. Strange, isn't it, that priests everywhe e always have these little perquisites attached to their office. When the Mother requires the services of her new recruit she will communicate with him in some mysterious manner through the stone.'

"He laughed, but the laugh made me shudder. 'Pitch it into the river,' I said, 'and, for goodness' sake, Baker, keep clear of this business. India isn't the country in which to play jokes with the horrible.'

"'Hello!' he exclaimed. 'Are you hit? You, my boy? Why, Somers, I thought pig-sticking and tiger-shooting had driven all that dreamy stuff clean out of your brain.'

"'I think these matters are best left alone,' said I, a bit nettled. 'Well, that,' said Baker, 'is a question we won't discuss. My object in sealing myself to the god less—don't shiver, my dear fellow—is twofold. To gain knowledge which may be useful to the Department—the priests of the Death-Mother, you will remember, were notable agents in stirring up the mutiny—and also to test for private satisfaction the nature and strength of powers which, here, are believed in implicitly, however much we may despise them at home.

"'Now, having said so much, I'll be frank, Somers, and say more. I'm really sorry I ever touched the thing. I feel more uncomfortable about it than I like. But I won't go back on it through funk—query, if I could?

"'Four months, I reckon, will suffi e to knock the bottom out of the business, or—wipe Tony Baker out of the Service.

"'It stands this way. Without admitting probability of danger, I wish to provide against possible contingencies.'

"'Great heavens!' I exclaimed, beginning now to catch a hint of his meaning. 'Have you gone mad?'

"'Not yet,' he answered, smiling, 'but, seriously, Somers, put me under surveillance, my dear fellow; begin to-day. If you should notice anything about me that strikes you as—suggestive; anything that looks—h'm—like going smash, speak to the doc—likely I'll drop Reid a us ful hint myself on the Q. T.—and have me put under restraint. Then send off to Ajmeer for Nynee Lal the *poojari*; give him the ring which I wear on the little finger, and tell him that the grey wolf hath need of him. He'll know what to do. Kali the Insatiable demands within three months of initiation a human victim. Her novice must prove himself, or—— Well, we don't believe the nonsense, of course. All the same though, old man, I've had some queer experiences in India.

"'Soon after coming out, an o d fellow came one day to my tent, and, after sitting silent awhile, begged permission to draw my horoscope. I gave him some particulars he asked for and dismissed him. Two weeks later, he came again, bringing a nativity card—it's in my possession now, you can s e it at any time. Of course he wanted *backsheesh*, but the point which concerns me is that everything set down in the table of periods has happened as predicted.

"'Don't misunderstand me. The nativity card isn't a monthly calendar. The old man divided my life into peric ds—indicat ng the critical years and forecasting the important passages. He's been right all the way.

"'Now listen, and remember, please, that it was not till after my return from Ka i's shrine that I thought of consulting the old nativity card, which I had not looked at since before coming to Burrampore. "It is now," says the card, "in this period—" that is the period I am now passing through, "that the great crisis in your life will occur. At this time you will pass under a dark shadow of fearful shape. You will leave this country and go over the black water, but the shadow will stay with you; and before the end of the period is reached"—it corresponds to December '63 by our reckoning, "the ta'e of thy years will be told."

"'Not a jot or a tittle of that will fail, Somers. It has the witness of fifteen years behind it.

"'But I see, Somers,' he went on, changing his tone on the instant, 'you can't take these little things so philosophically as I do; which shows you're a healthy English animal. Open the piano, my dear fellow, and let's play over a few airs from the operas.'

* * * * *

"It was just thirteen weeks after the conversation with Baker, that I found myself one of a small dinner-party given by the Collector to a few of the 'John Company' men. When the ladies withdrew, Baker sat opposite me.

"After the first month the disagreeable impression his story had left began to fade. By the end of the second month I could have believed it to be only the faint remembrance of some hideous dream.

"Everything was going the regular round. The gossip was not more ill-natured or personal than usual, nor did Baker's name come into it oftener than before. Sometimes I had a notion that Reid, the regimental doctor, would shoot a keen glance at the Commissioner; but not another word had been said to me on the subject; and gradually I had ceased to 'keep a watch.'

"Two days, however, before the dinner, Baker himself startled me by saying:

"'You haven't forgotten, I hope, what I asked of you, Somers?'—therefore, when he delibera ely took the seat immediately facing me, I had an uncomfortable sensation that something was going to happen.

"The decanters had been twice round, when I noticed that odd, luminous glitter in Baker's eyes which on a previous occasion had given them such a strange, unearthly glow.

"At the same time it occured to me that the man had been fumbling in his bosom for several minutes—feeling for that wretched bit of stone he kept there, the seal of Kali, wife of Siva the Destroyer. His voice, however, was still the voice of Baker—soft, persuasive, bland. Yet I observed that his eyes grew ever larger and brighter; while his body began to quiver as if under some uncontrollable emotion.

"I sat star ng at him, unable to do anything, save watch the glittering eyes, which presently assumed an expression that was perfectly fiendish in its frightful malignity. Suddenly I heard Reid's voice—he had gone out of the room for a few moments—and at the same instant Baker, rising in his seat, shouted in a tone of fierce exultancy: '*Jey Kali! Kali mata ke jey!* I am thine, Mother. *O maha Kali!*'

"By this time the doctor had got round the table; and I, having recovered from the spell which had paralysed me, was also now at Baker's side. In his eyes, which flamed with lurid light, there lurked possibilities of most fearful danger.

"The man's entire nature had undergone a change.

Digitized by Google

The cool, clear-headed Englishman had become the insane votary of the sanguinary Goddess on whose name he was calling by all the accursed phrases in the Gurúra Purána. Before we could stop him he had flung himself on the Judge. A naked weapon gleamed for a moment, but the doctor and I stuck to him, and Judge Matheson escaped with a nasty cut on the left cheek.

"The sight of the blood seemed to send Baker into a sort of frenzy. He laughed till we could have strangled him.

"'The man's blood-mad.' I heard the words without knowing who spoke them. But the doctor and I had exchanged a few whispers, and a messenger had already gone for Nynee Lal. Meanwhile, Indian hemp was handy, and ere long the patient lay unconscious on the floor.

"'What the mischief—?' began the doctor, and stopped. It was the seal of the Goddess, which, catching his eye, had provoked the exclamation. He looked at me. I made to tear it off, but he prevented me. 'Leave it,' he said almost fiercely. 'What business has he in this galley? The thing's *anathema*. Leave it for Nynee Lal. They're the devil's own, every one of these arch-priests of Kali.'

"It seemed a weary time before Nynee arrived. He appeared to know exactly what was required of him.

"Baker had recovered somewhat from the narcotic effects of the drug, and was gazing in rapt ecstasy upon some vision of the mind—'the blood-splashed image of Mother Durgá,' said the doctor.

"The old *poojari* began by sprinkling some incense over the bottom of a shallow brass plate, some red powder was poured into another, and some ashes of sandalwood into a third. While the perfume of the incense was filling the room, Nynee sat on his heels watching the blue smoke as it ascended upwards, and muttering scraps from the Gurúra Purána,—'the Devil's Litany,' the doctor called it.

"Of us, the *poojari* seemed quite as unconscious as was Baker.

"The incantations presently ceased, and the old man solemnly rising, drew round the patient a magic circle. Then divesting himself of his upper garments, he took some of the red powder, threw a few grains on the incense, which immediately flamed up, and, smearing the rest on his forehead, entered the circle, repeating the words: 'I greet thee, O Brother, in the name of the Mother.'

"Taking his place immediately behind Baker he crossed his hands over the Commissioner's head, muttering a few words in Sanscrit as he did so.

"The man stiffened, every muscle in his body becoming rigid, every feature fixed. Nynee continued to weave spells with his hands for the space of a minute; then, taking some ashes of sandalwood on which incense had been sprinkled, he rubbed the forehead of the patient with the mixture.

"In a few minutes Baker's eyes, which had been staring wide, closed. The *poojara* removed from his neck the mystic thread, placed the stone in a fold of his own girdle, and wetted the Commissioner's lips with some stuff from a diminutive-looking brass vessel, produced from the same receptacle.

"'The *sahib* will sleep long while,' he said, addressing us for the first time. 'When he wakes, his strength will be as water. Of Kali, the Black One, he will have no recollection. Our gods are not his gods, and he must go to his own.'

"Then Nynee Lal gathered up his property and departed.

* * * * *

"A month later Baker went home on sick leave. All the vitality seemed to have been drained out of the man. He could never make out what had happened to him; but never by any chance referred to the incidents which connected him with the terrible scene in the Collector's dining-room.

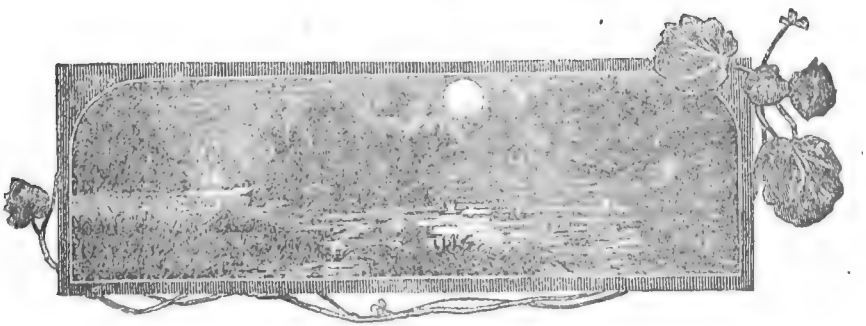
"At the end of the season I went to the Punjab; and for three years heard no more of Commissioner Baker. At the beginning of '67, however, I was in Calcutta and happened to meet Reid.

"'Baker?' said he, in reply to a query of mine. 'The man's dead—only lived about six months after reaching home.

"'Died in the following November. I had it from the doctor at Clayborough. He wrote me several times about the case. Couldn't understand it a bit. No disease, no wasting. Just a slow ebbing away of the vital power—end, total collapse. You didn't expect anything else, did you, after that devil's business at Burrampore?'

"And so," concluded the Colonel, "was fulfilled the prediction on the old jogee's nativity card."

H. Hunter.



Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XIX.

"Poor Louise."

"*Mars adamat Venerem!*" said Tristan, who had quite recovered his spirits and was spouting Latin with the volubility of a cheap-jack recommending his wares.

"With the help of Bacchus and his nymphs, we shall soon be masters of the gates, and then we can say '*Pandantur portae!*'"

"That's it," chimed in Trefouilloux confidently, "we'll hang every soldier to the gates who dares to refuse us!"

This remarkably free translation made Tristan laugh till his sides ached, and the good citizens said as they watched him:

"He's not too learned to enjoy a good joke like one of ourselves."

The guards at the Porte aux Peintres had been on the alert for some time as they heard the increasing tumult in the city, and their captain had ordered the gates to be closed and the portcullis to be lowered.

"What on earth is all this row?" he asked. "Has the whole city gone mad?"

Perhaps some of his soldiers had already been won over to the cause, for they answered calmly.

"Oh, it's nothing!" and at first it appeared as if they said true, for the crowd kept back, shrouded in the darkness, Samson having ordered all the torches to be extinguished; and only a gay, laughing band of girls advanced towards the archers, offering them wine and challenging them to join the dance. Nothing loth to enjoy themselves, the gallant sons of Mars responded cordially to the invitations of Venus, and as the cups were passed to and fro suspicions were lulled, and before many minutes had elapsed, the hand of a susceptible young archer had drawn the bolts back and the game was won.

The women sprang forward, and a cry of triumph rose from the hitherto silent crowd in the background. The half-drunken guard was speedily overpowered, despite the heroic efforts of the captain to resist the mob.

As the gates were flung open, La Fontanelle, who had followed the train at some distance, caught hold of a young girl she had brought with her, and said hurriedly:

"Martha, do you remember your sister Agnes, whom they called 'the Fair'?"

The girl had been laughing madly with the rest, but at these words her face clouded and hot tears started to her eyes.

"All right. I see that you've not forgotten her. You can cry over your murdered sister,—would you like to avenge her death?"

Martha seized both the woman's hands and her dark eyes gleamed dangerously.

"Well then, listen to me. The man who killed your sister is in this crowd, hidden under a disguise as he thinks, the coward that he is! You run as fast as you can to the Louvre, ask to see the King's page Albret, and tell him what you have seen."

"And will he come and kill my sister's murderer?" asked the girl in a tearful voice.

"Yes, he will come and kill him, if you don't forget to say that those who have forced the gate are on their way to take by storm the Abbey St. Martin, where Queen Ingeburge and her attendant, the Danish girl Eve, are in danger."

Martha needed no second bidding, but started off, fleet as a hare, and sure-footed as a mountain goat.

The drunken rabble surged through the gates, smashing the heads of the luckless victims of their hospitality as they went, and bearing triumphantly before them the wounded form of the captain of the guard in a roughly improvised litter.

In the open ground outside the walls the mob spread itself over the gardens and cultivated fields, leaving ruin and desolation wherever they trod. The torches were re-kindled, voices were raised louder than ever, and the destroying host pursued its mad march unchecked and triumphant. Not a flower, not a leaf, not a blade of grass was left where this swarm of human locusts had passed.

The three tallest and most powerful knaves carried a huge oaken beam immediately behind the banner, and this was to serve as a battering-ram, while they were followed by about fifty desperadoes armed with hatchets and mallets. In the centre of the force came a handful of Free-lances that they had managed to hire, and they were regarded as the mainstay of the attacking party, for men trained under Cadocu were better fighters than even the King's regulars.

These fellows knew that they would meet with a warm reception from their former chief when he knew that they had been concerned in this night's work, so they were very eager to provide for their future out of the abundant plunder that a rich abbey would afford.

The rest were flourishing branches which they had torn off the trees as they passed, old rusty swords, broken halberds, and even cooking spoons!

In the wake of this noisy horde walked a man and a woman, who, though evidently on the same errand, yet managed to keep apart from the main body. The man was dressed as a tramp, and his rags were of the filthiest description. The woman wore an exaggerated costume of the kind affected by the dancing girls of the city, and yet, when these two had met, evidently by appointment, in the Rue

Digitized by Google

aux Ours, the beggar had greeted her with a bow that would have done credit to the grandest courtier, and he might be heard from time to time addressing her with supplicating deference as "My Queen."

His fulsome adulation couched in poetic language savoured strongly of the chivalrous Courts of Love, with its romantic ballads and pretty courtesies.

She was sullen and unresponsive to his advances. Every attempt to propitiate her failed, for she had neither time nor thought to waste on such folly. Her mind was set on murder! Amaury Montruel, for it was he, as you will have guessed, had drawn his soft felt hat well down over his face to avoid detection, and Madame Agnes had so arranged the fantastic trimming of her headgear that only her dark, penetrating eyes were visible.

At last she broke the silence which she had imposed upon him, with:

"A whole week gone without a single thing to show for it! I think I was a fool to put my trust in you, Sir Amaury!"

"Ah! my Queen! If you knew half of what I suffered in that eternity that you call a week—"

She interrupted him, shrugging her shoulders contemptuously:

"What about that foreign knave you counted upon so surely?"

"Mahmoud-el-Reis has been in the Abbey St. Martin for some hours by this time."

"Then why all this masquerade? Are you afraid your infidel will not strike the blow home?"

"Up to this morning I had no fear, but then I made a discovery that both surprised and alarmed me."

Agnes turned upon him suspiciously:

"What discovery?" she demanded imperiously, seeing that he hesitated.

"Mahmoud-el-Reis has carved a statue," replied Montruel slowly, as if choosing his words carefully, "and this statue, which seems to him as an object of devotion, is the portrait of Madame Ingeburge!"

"*Holà*, comrades!" shouted a stifled voice from the rear of the crowd, "don't go so fast, it's all up hill, and we've plenty of time!"

"*Celsa sedet Eolus arce!*" replied Tristan, who was still well to the fore. "The wine of the monks is at the brow of the hill! A little more courage, boys, if you want to arrive before supper!"

"And supposing Mahmoud betrays you?" said Agnes bitterly.

"If Mahmoud betrays me," answered Montruel, lowering his voice, "I have found another man to do his work."

They had drawn a little nearer to the rabble, and he pointed out cautiously, a wretched creature some paces in front of them, who, as he turned round, showed a face, the villainy of whose expression made it remarkable, even in that mass of human depravity.

Madame Agnes looked at him carefully in the lurid light of the waving torches, and said, with a shudder of disgust:

"I have seen that man before somewhere."

"Yes, you've seen him outside Nôtre-Dame, my Queen, it was he who asked for the ruby pendant from your necklace. Don't you recognise 'Poor Louise'?"

She turned upon Montruel with an angry gesture, for she was in no mood for joking. But he was quite serious. This man, known to the greater part of Paris as "Poor Louise," was the successful rival of Ezekiel and Tréfouilloux, and offered for the consideration of the public his phenomenal physical construction consisting of four arms, one of which terminated in a goat's foot.

In return for a comparatively small sum Poor Louise had undertaken to supply the place of Mahmoud-el-Reis, in the event of his not having executed Montruel's orders, and to dispatch Madame Ingeburge with all speed, so soon as he should gain admittance to her presence.

He possessed great advantages over the Moslem, for he was neither influenced by false delicacy nor inspired by any

"Martha, do you remember your sister Agnes?"

poetic dreams of love and chivalry. Nothing appealed to his brutal nature but money.

Madame Agnes studied this new partizan with more calmness when she knew his value, and then broke off:

"The King is beginning to give way! This first day of the council has had a great effect on him, I can see, and I tell you it is more than ever important to get rid of this woman. Her life is my death!"

The three bearers of the battering-ram had by this time reached the gates, and a halt was made for the others to come up; then a furious onslaught was made on the iron-clamped door, and in a few seconds it gave way before the force of the attack.

The good monks, as we have seen, were wholly unprepared for this incursion, and were either retiring to rest or performing such duties as their offices required of them, secure in the peaceful and sacred character of their house.

In right of the Lord Abbot's temporal power, the monastery was garrisoned by a small, but well-disciplined force of archers, but, unfortunately, the scare about the assassin had taken these men from their posts just before the attack was made; had it been otherwise, the mob would soon have been beaten back, for the Abbey was so constructed that it could be held by a very small garrison.

As it was, the rabble met with no opposition when they got inside the vestibule, and a rush was made for the great staircase, which led to the main portion of the building.

In less time than it takes to write it, the usually calm, peaceful scene was converted into Pandemonium itself, the off-scourings of the city polluted the incense-laden air with their foul jests and ribald oaths, the long silent corridors were turned into channels for this turbid living torrent, the cells were invaded, the larder ransacked, the refectory, and even the chapel itself, thronged by these abandoned men

Perched herself on the broad sill.

and women, who revelled and fought under the shadow of the carved saints, and in sight of the Crucifix that bore silent witness in every room.

Tristan, who had been well supplied with wine on the way by the nymphs of Bacchus, was now quite incoherent, and his Latin would have paired admirably with that of Ezekiel or Tréfouilloux.

"Let's sack the place and burn the old shavelings out!" cried one and another.

"Bring us Ingeburge the alien!" shouted men and women alike.

The clash of arms and cries of the wounded were heard wherever the Free-lances and archers fought their way. Blood flowed freely, plunder and rapine raged in the abode of prayer and peace, and instead of midnight orisons there rose the yells of fiends in human shape in their quest for loot and liquor.

Some clamoured for the destruction of the Abbey by fire, others for the extinction of the monks. Tréfouilloux was in favour of the former, "*De fundum in comblum*," as he stated with dignity; but Ezekiel, who had an exact mind, corrected him thus: "*De fondo in comblos.*"

In spite of all this seeming confusion the real object of the raid was never lost sight of, for Maitre Samson had kept his head clear, and when he saw signs of demoralization, he whispered in the ear of one he could rely on, and immediately the cry was raised:

"Ingeburge the alien! Bring her out!"

While the main body had pressed into the Abbey, three figures, two men and a woman, had remained near the great door. The men were Montruel and "Poor Louise" and the woman was Madame Agnes.

"When you leave the vestibule," Montruel was saying to "Poor Louise" in a low tone, "turn to the right and go up the big staircase till you come to the statue of St. Martin: then turn to the right again and you will get to the second floor where the hospital is. You will very likely find a monk in charge, but if you show him your knife and say you will cut his throat if he does not tell you in which cell Jean Cador is, you'll be all right. Do you understand?"

"Yes, is that all?"

"Jean Cador will be able to tell you where Madame Ingeburge is to be found."

"And when I've found her——" began "Poor Louise" with a hideous grin. "I'll——" and he made an eloquent thrust with his knife.

Montruel turned to the listening woman, who had withdrawn into the darkest nook she could find, to ask if she were satisfied, and "Poor Louise" started upon his dark errand.

"Stop!" cried the woman. "Poor Louise" obeyed with a bad grace, and Montruel thought, for a moment, that some gleam of pity had at last penetrated Madame Agnes' hard heart, but she soon undeceived him by saying, in low, cold tones:

"Suppose Jean Cador is a traitor, or is lying insensible, helpless, from the effects of this morning's dose, what then?"

Montruel sighed, he was sick of bloodshed.

"If Jean Cador gives you any trouble, you must kill him, and anyone else who stands in your way. The monks will soon tell you if you prick them with your knife! Only begone, and do it quickly!"

"If you succeed," added Agnes, "I will give you a solid gold chain, worth thirty gold crowns, in addition to what you have been already promised."

"Poor Louise" gave a yell of joy, and vanished brandishing his knife. He might beg for years and not get half such a sum, this was a chance he would never have again, he must make the most of it!

As soon as he had gone, Montruel and Madame Agnes stepped back into the garden and disappeared in the copse adjoining the Abbey.

CHAPTER XX.

The Sacking of the Abbey St. Martin.

A venerable old man with white hair, and a grave, kindly face, appeared at the door of the large hall opening out of the refectory, and he was instantly greeted with frantic cries of "Ingeburge the alien! Bring out Madame Ingeburge!" as the excited revellers pressed upon him. They thought he was someone of importance and they were right, for it was Prior Anslem himself. He looked sadly at the sea of faces before him, some of which were flushed and triumphant, others bestial and besotted, all marred by indulgence in the lowest passions of humanity; and there was in his voice a calm dignity as he put the simple question:

"Who are you who thus defile the house of God?"

"If it please you, Sir Prior," began Tristan with a desperate effort to speak plainly, "we are the pious sons of the University. We come here on a pious errand—*Pieiatis Causae*. It distresses us sorely to be deprived of the Sacraments of our holy Mother, the Church, so we wish to break down the barrier between us and our eternal welfare."

"Well said! That's it!" shouted his followers.

In order to emphasise this solemn announcement still further, Tréfouilloux brought forth, with unction, the treasures of his learning:

"*Magnificat! Benedictus! Cicero! Cara Michel Larigus.*"

A slight flush spread over the old Prior's face, as he answered gravely:

"You mock at holy things, my poor children! May God grant you time and place for repentance!"

Digitized by Google

These simple, earnest words, spoken, as they were, out of the fulness of the good man's heart, did not fail to touch those of his hearers. Many heads were bent in shame, many eyes were wet with tears, many hearts were struck with fear, and for a moment an ominous silence fell upon all.

"*Quousque Tandem*——" began Tristan at last, but Samson, interrupting him, took the word with due gravity.

"Reverend Father, raillery is far from our thoughts! We are only striving to do here what the most illustrious council is working to effect in the city. We desire to put an end to the lamentable state of things under which our beloved kingdom is suffering. We serve Church and King. If you will deliver Madame Ingeburge into our hands, we will conduct her out of France, which she never ought to have entered, and, if needs be, see her safely to her native land."

Samson was a clever rogue. By these well-chosen words he repudiated all idea of blasphemy or violence, and the awakened consciences of the mob were speedily lulled to rest again. What better motive could they have than to remove the cause of discord from the land, and enable both King and people to make their peace with the Church? With the facile conscience of an excited multitude, they quickly persuaded themselves that they were there on a holy mission, so that when the Prior attempted to reply to Samson's sophistry, his voice was drowned in an angry murmur.

"Reverend Father, you are wrong!" bawled Tréfouilloux insolently. "The noble scholar Tristan, King of the Basoche, told you his mind when he called you *Quousque Tandem!*"

"But," vainly interposed Tristan.

"*Quousque Tandem! Quousque Tandem!*" resounded on all sides.

While Prior Anselm was endeavouring to get a hearing in this wild babel of derisive tongues, "Poor Louise" was stealthily pursuing his way along the path mapped out by Amaury Montruel, thinking of the promised reward of thirty gold crowns. Had he recognized Madame Agnes in the veiled woman, the remembrance of her former benefactions would have checked his hopes and made him feel disposed to try the point of his knife in her avaricious breast.

He found his way quite easily to the second floor where the hospital cells were situated, and met neither monk nor lay-brother to bar his passage or prove his prowess, for that part of the building had been, as we have seen, quite deserted by all those who could either fight or flee.

Meanwhile the little party in Jean Cador's cell had remained in a state of agonised suspense. Eric tried again and again to read the inscrutable face of the Moslem in the dim light, but it was impossible. More than once he thought he heard a curious noise as of snapping cords, but he bent down and carefully examined the Syrian's bonds and found them intact, so far as he could see, and he felt not a little humiliated as he noticed the grave smile with which his precautions were received.

Every moment increased their danger. They could hear the rush of feet below them, and more than once the cry of "Fire" had risen above the general tumult. As the panic was reaching its height, Mahmoud-el-Reis spoke to Eric for the first time.

"If you will cut these bonds, I can save the Queen."

"Have these people come to kill the Queen, then?"

"They will set me free, if you don't. But it will then be too late to save the Queen!"

"Then you're in league with them! You know their errand!" cried Eric, seizing his dagger. "You confess that the Queen's life is in danger! But I swear that neither they nor I will deliver you, for at the first step in this cell, you will be a dead man!"

Mahmoud vouchsafed no other answer to this outburst than to say:

"There is but one God who is God, and Mohammed is His Prophet! The destiny of man is written in the book of Al'ah. It is not the will of Allah that the Queen should escape."

Suddenly a ruddy glow illuminated the cell. It came from the court-yard beneath one of the windows, where the more light-hearted of the rioters were dancing to the music of ribald songs.

Buried his dagger in the ruffian's breast.

At the close of each round a chorus of voices raised the catch-word: "Ingeburge the alien! Ingeburge, the bane of France and her King!"

The poor Queen covered her face with her hands as she listened, and murmured:

"That is my death sentence! I pray you, my fathers, prepare my soul to appear before God!"

The monks, at first, neither heard nor understood, but she continued her supplications till the younger one came and knelt at her side and began to mutter incoherently the commendatory prayer.

Eve was kneeling on the ground at the other end of the cell, and over her head was a high, deeply-set window looking towards the old Roman road which led from the Porte-aux-Peintres.

On this side of the Abbey all was quiet, and the pure white light of the moon formed a fitting contrast to the lurid glare of the torches which came from the interior of the building, while the soft sighing of the night-wind fell soothingly upon the ear in the short intervals of peace that the watchers were permitted. The contrast between Nature in repose and Humanity in revolt was painfully marked; but none of them had time to notice this, save perhaps the Syrian.

A new sound caught Eve's ear, and she started up instantly, for it came from the direction of the city.

In a moment she had swung herself up by the bar which

For a moment he was seen in the glare of the flames, the dark Moslem and the white Queen.

ran across the window and perched herself on the broad sill. At first she could see nothing, but by insinuating her head out of the opening she could distinguish the clatter of horses' hoofs and the clang of armour, then, as it came nearer, she caught sight of bright, moving specks, glancing in the moonlight, through the mutilated trees. She was quick to recognise them as the glittering breast-plates and sparkling helmets of the King's soldiers.

"The soldiers! The King's soldiers!" she cried raptuously.

Mahmoud looked up at once, and Eric was surprised to see pleasure rather than chagrin depicted on his face. It was impossible to understand this man;

The Queen had risen at her husband's name and was looking anxiously at the young girl.

"Is it a large troop of men?" asked the Moslem.

"They cover the road! said Eve quickly, and her heart was beating fast with joy as she added in a lower tone, "and I know who leads them! I know him! I know him!"

Mahmoud was still listening intently to every sound that came to them from the interior of the Abbey, and now he turned to Eve, saying:

"If they are near enough, maiden, call to them that they come quickly, or it will be too late!"

"Albret!" called Eve with all her might. "Albret, my lord! my friend come to the rescue!"

But the night-wind carried her clear young voice in the other direction, and the next time she tried to shout, her voice could not even be heard by those in the cell, so fierce was the tumult below.

After the temporary lull caused by the parley with Prior Anselm, the rioters had broken loose again with renewed vigour. The first floor had already been pillaged, an outlying part of the building had been set on fire and the flames were casting their light on the revolting scene. Death and destruction seemed to be engulfing all, even those who had come to destroy.

Eve dropped from the window and resumed her place at the Queen's side, while Eric laid hold of his dagger, prepared to fulfil his threat, and the two monks fled from the cell, perhaps to meet a worse fate.

The trained ear of Mahmoud-el-Ee's could distinguish between the rush of the rabble and the steady tramp of the soldiers. But who would reach them first? The assassins or the rescuers?

Just as the monks reached the end of the corridor they met "Poor Louise," who promptly took the first man by the throat and demanded:

"Where is Jean Cador's cell?"

The terrified monk fell senseless at his feet, and his companion could only make frantic gestures to the door they had just left.

Tristan and his band were pressing up behind. Some of them heard an increased clash of arms below, but none paused to account for it, so "Poor Louise" felt he had no time to lose. Dealing a blow with his fist at the second monk, he made for the door indicated, and the first thing his eyes met was Eve clinging to her mistress.

At the sight of his repulsive face and tremendously bulky form, his fat red hand waving the long butcher's knife, both the women shrank back involuntarily in terror and disgust.

"Ha, ha!" thought the brute, "I'm on the right track now."

Turning to the two men he said:

"Which of you is Jean Cador, carver of images?"

"I am," replied Eric promptly, and bending down he whispered to Mahmoud:

"If you deny it, you're a dead man!"

The Syrian made no answer, but as Eric's attention was necessarily diverted from him, there might have been heard a renewal of that strange cracking sound, and when it ceased, the captive gave a deep sigh of relief.

(To be continued.)

Digitized by Google

"Ah, ah, so you're Jean Cador? Are you? Then you can tell me which of these two is Queen Ingeburge!"

"I am the Queen!" said Eve, stepping forward bravely.

"Poor Louise" made a dash at the girl, and had already raised his long knife when he felt himself dragged backwards by the hair, and with a quick plunge, Eric had buried his dagger in the ruffian's breast. Like a huge inert mass, the wretch lay at his feet. Without a twitch or a change of colour, he fell in a heap, just as the others swarmed up to the door.

Tristan had not forgotten the face of the prettiest girl in Paris, through all his mad carouse, and most of his fluent Latin phrases had been in praise of the divinity, whom in his eyes, she excelled in charm.

The moment he caught sight of her he waved his cap and cried: "At last! *En Ecce!* Behold her!" and sprang forward to clasp her in his arms. The wildest confusion raged for a few seconds. Shouts of "Kill! Kill! in the King's name!" were heard coming up behind, mingled with frantic clamours for Ingeburge's blood. But the soldiers were gaining ground, and their swords were cutting a ghastly path through the mob, towards the door of the cell.

Eric, thinking that the climax had come, turned on Mahmoud with his dagger raised, saying between his teeth:

"I swore you should not see the Queen die!"

He made a desperate thrust at the Syrian, but, as if by magic, the captive sprang to his feet and wrenched the weapon out of his assailant's hand with such force that Eric slipped on the blood-stained floor and lay stunned at the Moslem's feet.

Without regarding anyone else, Mahmoud-el-Reis made straight for the Queen and flung one arm round her, throwing Eve to the ground as he did so, and with the other he brandished Eric's dagger.

Tristan, ever mindful of Eve, bent down to steal a kiss from her unconscious lips, but his gallantry cost him dear.

Albret's sword descended with a well-aimed force on the head of his former comrade, and the King of the Basoche, fell beside the girl he had sought so eagerly.

Having settled this personal account, Albret turned to intercept the course of Mahmoud-el-Reis, but a thrust from the Syrian's dagger laid him low, and the son of the desert pursued his way with flashing eye and dilated nostril, bearing the unconscious form of the Queen still before him. The quickness and dexterity of his movements seemed to paralyse those who would have opposed his passage, and soldiers and tramps alike gave way before him.

For a moment he was seen in the glare of the flames, the dark Moslem and the white Queen, his blood-stained dagger raised aloft against the dark background of struggling humanity, and then he vanished, leaving on the air the sound of his fierce war-cry:

"There is but one God, who is God, and Mohammed is His prophet!"

As these words fell upon the dying ear of Tristan the Scholar, he made a last effort to look at Eve, then sinking back, murmured faintly:

"*Vitaque cum gemitu fugit sub umbras.*"

So he died, faithful to his oath, speaking Latin to the last, having lost his life for a kiss, and staked his all upon the chance of seeing her, who, perhaps, had things been different, might have won him back to the life of honour he had still the grace to admire.

(*To be continued.*)

The May Pearson's

The Most Sumptuously Illustrated - - Magazine. - -

NOW ON SALE. PRICE SIXPENCE.

SOME OF THE CONTENTS:

THE ROYAL ACADEMY. A most interesting account is given of the origin and history of the great national Academy of Art. The article is magnificently illustrated with many reproductions of famous pictures.

HOW SOLDIERS FIGHT. No. II.—Artillery. (Illustrated by Stanley L. Wood.) By F. Norreys O'Connell. Mr. O'Connell gives a splendid description of the duties of the artillery man on the field of battle.

HE MAN WHO MEASURES EARTHQUAKES. (Illustrated with Photographs.) By Cleveland Moffett. Here we have the marvellously interesting life history of Professor Milne, who knows more about earthquakes than any other man living. Mr Milne has constructed an earthquake-observatory in the Isle of Wight, where he has set up instruments which will record the slightest tremor of the earth, even in such a far distant country as Japan.

QUEER NESTS AND NESTING PLACES. (Illustrated with Photographs.) By E. le Breton-Martin.

THE DETHRONEMENT OF THOMAS WAGGE. (Illustrated by Raymond Potter.) By J. R. Creed. A complete story.

CRICKET CLUBS. Written and Illustrated by Harry Furniss.

THE DIVE OF DEATH. (Illustrated by D. Murray Smith.) By Alys Hallard. A complete story.

THE WHITE MAGICIAN. (Illustrated from Photographs.) By Rudolph de Cordova. An illustrated interview with Edison.

SHOW CATS. (Illustrated by Louis Wain and from Photographs.) By G. B. Burgin.

THE ADVENTURES OF CAPTAIN KETTLE. No. XI.—The Salving of the "Duncansby Head." (Illustrated by Stanley L. Wood.) By Cutcliffe Hyne.

A CITY OF CARS. (Illustrated with Photographs.) By Merriden Howard. An interesting account is given and excellent photographs are reproduced of a "city" (using the word in the Californian sense) in which all the houses are formed of disused tramcars, each one set up in its own plot of land.

THE MASKED MEN OF TUSCANY. (Illustrated with Photographs.) By Herbert Vivian. This great brotherhood, freely and without any reward, tends the sick and buries the dead of the city of Leghorn.

LIFE'S LITTLE WORRIES. (Illustrated by A. Popini.) By W. L. Alden.

Some Books Worth Reading.

NOW READY.

PAUL BECK: The Rule-of-Thumb Detective. By M. McDonnell Bodkin, Q.C. Crown 8vo, cloth. Price 3s. 6d.

Paul Beck, the Rule-of-Thumb Detective, is an Irish Sherlock Holmes, with a very original yet logical method for the detection of crime. Hitherto we have had every species of detective, except an Irish one, and it has been reserved for Mr. McDonnell Bodkin to set right this injustice to the Sister Isle.

THE VIRGIN OF THE SUN.—A Tale of the Conquest of Peru.—By George Griffith, Author of "The Angel of the Revolution," "Valdar the Oft-Born," "Men Who Have Made the Empire," etc., etc. Crown 8vo, cloth. With Frontispiece by Stanley L. Wood. Price 6s. 306 pp.

THE SHROUDED FACE. By Owen Rhoscomyl, Author of "Battlement and Tower," "The Jewel of Ynys Galon." Crown 8vo, cloth. Price 6s. *Ready May 18th.*

This is a tale of the time of Elizabeth, and the scene is placed in Wales. At that period many Welsh gentlemen took to the sea as rovers, finding their swordland on the Spanish main, as their fathers had found a swordland on the English marches.

JOHN OF STRATHBOURNE. A Romance of the days of Francis I. By R. D. Chetwode. Crown 8vo, cloth. Price 3s. 6d.

The above books can be obtained at all Booksellers, and from the Libraries, or post free for the published price from C. Arthur Pearson Ltd., "Book Department," Henrietta Street, W.C.

THE LILAC WITCH.

"It can't be as bad as that, Sophie. Must your father have twenty thousand francs by the first of June?"

"Yes, Henri, or else"—her lip quivered a little—"or else the mortgage will be foreclosed, and father will lose all his land, and we shall be homeless."

"Not if I'm here," said Henri stoutly.

Sophie looked proudly at him, and then at the walls of the studio. What an artist Henri was!

She came to him, and laying her hand gently on his shoulder, gazed sadly into his eyes and said:

"I know, Henri, I know. But then you are poor now."

"I shall rise—get a picture into the Salon—make money——"

"Yes, dear; but if papa loses all his property, and besides—" and her grey eyes grew moist and she looked wistfully away.

"And besides?" repeated Henri with anxious inquiry.

"And, besides, papa has been hinting at the marriage proposals of Jean Bertrand, an old playmate of mine, who offers to pay off all the mortgage on the day of his betrothal to me."

"To you, Sophie! you don't mean that you—that your father——"

Sophie looked down sadly at a pair of neat little feet.

"Henri, you know I love you, and that I have promised faithfully to be your wife; but think of poor papa, and think of all I owe him—ought I not to be ready to make any sacrifice that will save him from ruin?"

"Sophie," he exclaimed, after a pause. "I have thought of a plan. We, you and I, can earn that twenty thousand."

"Yes, yes; how?"

"Why, you be my model, and I'll paint you."

"Oh, will you? But—but you couldn't sell a picture of me for twenty thousand francs."

In answer Henri drew her before a little square mirror hung between two windows, and made her look at her own reflection.

"See there, Sophie! just look at your eyes—are they not the deepest grey, with golden lights in them? are not your lips as red as this carmine? and just see that little pointed chin! how I could paint that! and those pink cheeks—fresh as a baby's!"

Sophie began to blush at Henri's enthusiasm, and turning from the glass looked into his dark face, which was lit up with a glow of almost poetic inspiration.

"And, you know," he went on, "something tells me that I shall paint you better than I ever painted anything before—that you will be my inspiration. You must wear a loosely fitting, very soft lilac robe, and you will have your hair down, hanging over your left shoulder, which will peep through your curls like a white dove in a golden cage. And you must hold a spray of lilac in your hand and be reclining under a lilac-bush, and I'll call you the 'Lilac Witch.'

"Did you ever hear the legend of the 'Lilac Witch'? Grandma used to love to tell me about her; she was a very beautiful fairy, and men came round to catch a smile from her red lips, and the man she smiled on was made bold to do great deeds; but if his heart were drawn to another woman, in a moment she spoilt all he had done, and made a beggarly wretch of him. Besides, you know, the lilac will go well with your complexion, and hair, and eyes."

And so it was planned. He threw the whole of his poetic soul into his work, striving to get that longing, inspiring look in the large grey eyes, which, mingled with an expression, half of pity, half of triumph, in the rest of the face, was to make up the ideal of the "Lilac Witch." He found the look of longing and inspiration in Sophie's eyes, but the pity and triumph—that divine mixture of pride in victory and sorrow for the conquered—were wanting. By his own talent Henri created them, inspired by his love and the prize set before him.

One day in May she was telling him of the importunities of Bertrand, when he interrupted her.

"Very good for M. Bertrand," he said. "But I have something to tell you."

Then he told her how the agent of a rich Englishman was looking all over Paris for paintings of beautiful women; how he had seen the "Lilac Witch," now nearly finished, and how he had, with an Englishman's extravagance, offered the fabulous sum of thirty thousand francs.

That ended the sitting for that day, for Sophie insisted on taking Henri at once to her father to tell him the news, and to make him break off all further negotiations with Jean Bertrand.

It was arranged that Henri was to pay off the mortgage as soon as the picture was transferred, keeping the surplus of ten thousand to start life with Sophie, while her father dismissed Jean Bertrand, with the precautionary hint that, in case the Englishman should fail them, he would immediately accept Bertrand's offer.

It was the evening before the next day when the

Digitized by Google

GOOD NEWS FOR STOUT PERSONS.

It is a matter for congratulation that obesity is taking its proper place as a disease, and is receiving that scientific attention which it has long lacked. It does not follow that a person needs to be the size of Sir John Falstaff to show that he is unhealthily fat. According to a person's height so should his weight correspond, and this standard has been prepared by Mr. F. C. Russell, of Woburn House, Store Street, Bedford Square, London, W.C., so that anyone can see at a glance whether or no he is too stout. People in the past have been wont to regard fatness as constitutional, and something to be laughed at rather than to be prescribed for seriously; but this is evidently an error, as persons whose mode of life has caused a certain excess of flesh require treating for the cause of that excess, not by merely stopping further increase, but by removing the cause itself. It is astonishing how long we go on perpetuating error, and how difficult it is to make people disbelieve anything, no matter how palpably false the principle, if it has become at all firmly fixed in the public mind. These facts with regard to obesity, however, are so obvious that there ought to be no difficulty about their acceptance when once they become known; and, as a matter of fact, the immense number of persons who have already acknowledged their truth by recording the benefits received from Mr. Russell's treatment is simply wonderful. It is marvellous how this "Pasteur" and "Koch" of English discoverers can actually reduce as much as 14lb. in seven days with a simple herbal remedy. His book only costs 3d., and he is quite willing to afford all information to those sending as above. It is really worth reading.—*Southport Visitor.*

CORPULENCE

INCREASING POPULARITY OF AN EFFECTUAL CURE.

Many of our readers are, doubtless, familiar with the nature of the extraordinary revolution in the cure of obesity which, within recent years, has been wrought by the original researches of that now eminent expert, Mr. F. Cecil Russell, of Woburn House, Store Street, Bedford Square London, W.C. It is evident that the certainty, the rapidity, and the agreeable surroundings of his curative process have been recognised, in a very large degree, among ladies and gentlemen belonging to the highest social circles. Keen observers who have an opportunity of judging inform us, through the pages of society papers and otherwise, that owing to the general employment of Mr. Russell's treatment extreme obesity is becoming as much a thing of the past, at fashionable gatherings, as intoxication; and, no doubt, it will soon be regarded as nearly as disgraceful. The issue of an eighteenth edition of the author's singularly convincing little text-book, "Corpulency, and the Cure," however, serves to remind us that the popularity of the system has now reached spheres far remote from those of West End fashion. The book of 256 pages may be had (post free) by sending three penny stamps to Mr Russell's offices, as above; and it is worth the careful attention of those who wish to free themselves of a burden of fat—not merely because it is unseemly and adds enormously to the apparent age of the sufferer—but because extreme obesity terribly interferes with the energy necessary in these days of competition to make one's way in the world, or even to earn a very modest competency. A large proportion of the letters of Mr. Russell's grateful correspondents refer to their delight at being enabled—within a very brief period, and without any irksome conditions implying semi-starvation—to attack their accustomed tasks with pleasure instead of wearied disgust, through being reduced to their normal weight. The popularity of the system is also largely due, doubtless, to the English hatred of mystery, which is utterly swept aside by Mr. Russell. He fully explains his *modus operandi*, and supplies the receipt for his preparation.—*Bicester Herald.*

Digitized by Google

picture was to be formally sold, and thirty thousand francs handed over, and Henri and Sophie married. Henri was in the studio standing before a picture. In one hand he held a lighted cigarette. In the other an acutely pointed paint brush. He was scrutinising the face of his beloved "Lilac Witch" with a look of intense exultation. Every now and then he would make an infinitesimal stroke with the brush, after which he would take a long pull at the cigarette. He was putting on what he called the last touches before he said good-night to the picture and went to call on Sophie. He looked at his watch. It was already past nine and he had promised to be there at eight. Still there were only a few more tiny touches needed and then he would go. He lit another cigarette, he walked up and down the room, changed the lamps and surveyed the painting from twenty different points of view. Finally he seemed satisfied, threw down the brush, drew a sofa up in front of the easel and lay there, watching the Witch's face with a lover's rapture. His chest heaved, his eyes grew bright, the muscles round his face softened into an expression of supreme delight.

Suddenly he started and looked at his watch. It was twelve o'clock and he had forgotten, and Sophie had probably gone to bed, wondering why he never came. He blamed himself for being so thoughtless.

This changed the current of his thoughts, reminding him that to-morrow he married Sophie, and they would always live together; a bright smile lit up his face, but it was a commonplace smile compared to his look of a few seconds ago.

Yes; to-morrow Sophie would be his, and they would come and pay him thirty thousand francs and take away the "Lilac Witch." Take away the "Lilac Witch"? Why, of course; he only painted it for the sake of marrying Sophie.

Henri looked away from the picture with a dull ache of his heart. Somehow, life with Sophie when the "Lilac Witch" was gone did not seem so sweet as it used in the days when they had the first sittings. Then the picture only meant to him the portrait of his dear Sophie. Now, when he was gazing into that fair, arch face on the canvas, so triumphant and yet so pitying and tender, he never thought of its being Sophie's face at all. He seemed to see there something that was all his own, and had come out of his own soul. How could he bear to part with it? But he was winning Sophie by giving it up. A horrible doubt came to him. What if after all he should love the picture better than the model? He shook his head resolutely, and went to bed. All that night in his dream that awful thought tormented him.

On the morrow Sophie appeared before the hour of the business transaction, in order to tidy up the studio and make it look more festive. She found Henri there before the picture as usual. He had wheeled the easel up near the window and was devouring the painting with his eyes. He never so much as turned his head to greet her.

Henri looked long at the face, and then turned and glanced half timidly, half hopefully, at Sophie. She thought she caught his meaning and smiled back at him.

"Is it like?" she laughed.

Henri's face lost the look of hope. He turned eagerly back to the picture, looked at it a minute, then turned away with a sigh. Sophie came to him, and looking over his shoulder at the lovely picture of herself, asked him why he sighed. He answered:

"Ah, Sophie, you cannot understand, you cannot know the feeling of adoration which an artist has for something into which he has poured his whole soul. This is my masterpiece. I shall never do anything so good, so rich, so valuable again—no, never! All the strength, all the purity, all the poetry, of my inmost soul are embodied in that one painting, now—now, I must part with it—must say good-bye for ever to what has been meat and drink to me for months past. You cannot know what it has come to mean to me. It is more than a portrait. It is an ideal in which I have lived for months. Oh, where—where shall I find anything to take its place?"

And Henri, kneeling before the figure, spread out his hands in supplication. Sophie knelt beside him, and gently passing one arm over his shoulder, whispered softly to him, as if they already knelt before the altar:

"Henri, Henri, here I am! have you not me? Did you not paint that picture to marry me? and now it's done, we are to be married, and you are to have me always?"

She paused. Henri slowly looked round and gazed long and steadily, with a blank, searching look into her sweet, pale face. Then he turned towards the "Lilac Witch," shuddered, and sorrowfully shook his head. He noticed that in a spot near the edge of the canvas the varnish had worn a little rough. He got up from his knees, and pushing aside a curtain, went into a side room to get a pot of varnish.

Sophie remained motionless, kneeling before the picture, her bosom heaving, her eyes flashing, her hands clutching convulsively at her dress. She repeated his last words:

"Where shall I find anything to take its place?"

Jealousy, as cruel as the grave, jealousy of her own idealised self, jealousy of the image of her own person reflected in the artist's imagination, was taking hold of her. Oh, how she hated the picture that had stolen her only possession! had cheated her of Henri's love. She arose and looked savagely at the "Lilac Witch." Then, glancing wildly round the room for a weapon, she spied on a little table Henri's mixing-knife. It was of steel, and quite sharp. She ran to it, seized it, and then coming up so close that her hot breath made the canvas moist, she hissed:

"There, you thief!" and with a few strokes of the knife, she cut and slashed the lovely face, and tore out the grey eyes, and hacked the poor head and bosom into shreds. Then throwing back her head, she stood upright, panting and trembling, before her disfigured rival.

At that second it seemed as if the scornful, pitying, triumphant look of the "Lilac Witch" had passed into her own face.

Just then came a rustle of the curtain and a rattle at the door. Henri slipped in quietly from the inner room, and Sophie's father came bustling in from the hall. The two men came forward and greeted one another cordially; then they turned towards Sophie and the picture.

With a sharp cry Henri bounded forward, and pressing his forehead against the mutilated painting, cried like a child.

Sophie looked wildly about, and staggered towards her father. He roughly led her to a chair.

Then pulling his hat down over his ears, he said hoarsely, half aloud:

"I must go and find Jean Bertrand."

F. M. L.

Digitized by Google

You Can't Afford——

to be without

Antiseptic.
Pure.
Preserves Food and Milk.
Stops Smells.
Arrests Decay.
Purifies everything.
Invaluable for the Bath and Toilet.
For Rinsing and Cleansing.

By Special Appointment

Makers to Her Majesty.

THE PATENT BORAX CO. LTD., LADYWOOD, BIRMINGHAM.
LONDON DEPOT: 129 HIGH HOLBORN.
Grocers, Oilmen, and Stores keep it

DIRECT FROM THE FACTORY.

THE

"DERBY" DESK

Is quite the Finest in the World. Every portion is made under the personal supervision of the Originator. We both Recommend and Guarantee the "Derby" Desk. It has a Roll-Top, which locks all the drawers automatically when shut down; full of convenient pigeonholes, etc. Elegant, Useful, and Durable! All prices from £7; as Illustrated, £8 8s. Invaluable in the Private Study and the Office. We stock a large variety of Novelties and Specialities in Office and Library Appliances. New Handsome Illustrated No. 61 Catalogue sent free to any reader of *Short Stories* on application. Filing Cabinets and Elastic Bookcases a Speciality.

THOMAS TURNER

(Leicester) LTD.,

44 HOLBORN VIADUCT, LONDON, E.C.; 7 & 9 NEWARKE STREET, LEICESTER.

KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR.

WHY INDUCE HEART DISEASE TO CURE YOUR HEAD

When you can get a real safe remedy like **KAPUTINE?**

Dr. Thurston, Licentiate, of the Royal College of Physicians, writes November 16th: "Knowing the formulæ from which KAPUTINE is compounded, I unhesitatingly recommend its use in preference to crude Antifibrin and other synthetic drugs which, unfortunately for sufferers, are so commonly used for Headache, and which have undoubtedly injurious effects on the Heart, Brain, and Vesicle tissues generally."

NOTHING LIKE KAPUTINE. NOTHING SIMILAR. NOTHING AS GOOD.

All leading Chemists sell it. Packets of 18 doses 1s. Sample 1d.

After 13 Years' Suffering, Cured for 1s.

The Rev. T. Taylor, Vicar of St. Bredward, Cornwall, writes: "Owing to a severe accident while riding, my wife has for the past thirteen years been subject to violent attacks of neuralgia. The relief she has experienced from KAPUTINE has been speedy and effectual. KAPUTINE, while it is efficacious in its use, is attended with none of the disagreeable after effects which she has experienced in the case of other drugs."

After 10 Weeks' Suffering, Cured for 1d.

From Rev. J. H. Burn.

Deer Rectory, Mintlaw, Aberdeen, November 8th, 1897.

"My own cure with one dose of KAPUTINE was marvellous after ten weeks incessant neuralgia.

Used also by Her Grace the Countess of Cavan, Lady Dashwood, The Countess of Munster, Surgeon Lieut.-Col. Baker, etc., etc.

Nothing Similar. Nothing as Good. **KAPUTINE CURES HEADACHE IN 10 MINUTES.**

If you enclose stamped envelope to A. M. Kaputine Ltd., Huddersfield, you will get free samples by return.

KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR.

Digitized by Google

IN FRIENDLY CONVERSE.

I WISH to draw special attention this week to the new War Competition, of which particulars will be found in another part of this number. The fact that most of the names indicated by the pictures have already appeared in the daily papers make the Competition of special interest.

P. O. writes to say that he has been looking up the subject and finds that more robberies of letters take place in August and September than during any other part of the year. How is it?————Probably this is attributable to the fact that those months form the holiday season, when a much greater amount of money is transmitted by post.

S. C. W.—There is still room in Westminster Abbey for the burial of another eighty or ninety persons, and, taking the average of the last century, it will be a long time yet before these places are filled up.

YOUNG MOTHER.—The average baby is sensible to light, touch, temperature, smell, and taste on the first day of its existence. Hearing comes on the third or fourth day. Speech should begin by the end of the first year.

MINERVA, T. T., and Others.—It is astonishing what a number of my readers are victims to extreme nervousness. The following is a simple cure suggested by an old doctor of our acquaintance. Devote half-an-hour a day to absolute rest in a darkened room. Lie down, close your eyes, and refuse to be disturbed by any one for thirty minutes. The method is certainly simple enough, and, where possible, at any rate deserves a trial.

F. P.—"Escroquerie" is a crime in France which has no distinct counterpart in England. When a person orders any goods for which they are unable to pay, they are arrested and imprisoned, as the French see no great difference between running off with an article and getting it without paying for it.

B. L. E.—The most expensive war, viewed from the point of yearly expenditure, was the United States Civil War, on which the expenditure was at the rate of three hundred and fifty millions per annum. The Franco-German War stands next highest, its cost having been at the rate of three hundred and sixteen millions per year.

ANCIENT.—The viking ship that was found in a mound on the shores of Christiania fjord is the oldest sailing craft in existence. It is one thousand years old.

H. G.—The only countries in the world where the horses outnumber the human beings are Algeria and the district of the River Plate.

SAXON writes: "Is there any meaning attached to the prefix of 'O',' so common to Irish names?"————It is an abbreviation of the word "ogha," meaning grandchild, so that originally O'Brien signified, "grandson of Brien," and so on.

H. M.—No, Chinese cannot be telegraphed; figures have to be used corresponding to certain words. Only one-eighth of the words of the language are in this code, but this has been found sufficient for practical purposes.

D. S. asks: "Why is the pineapple such an expensive fruit in this country?"————Because it requires such a great amount of care and attention and expense to rear. The fruit requires to be grown in hot-houses specially devoted to it, and great care has to be taken to preserve a certain temperature. Then, again, each plant produces only a single fruit and then dies; the suckers, however, become bearing plants for a subsequent year.

P. P.—The huge guns of modern navies can be fired only about seventy-five times, when they become worn out.

TIME.—The Christian Era, as a basis for reckoning time, was not invented until the sixth century. It was ordered to be used by bishops at a council held in 816, but it was not generally used till much later. Charles III. of Germany was the first to use the words "in the year of our Lord" on documents; that was in 879.

R. N.—No bird of prey has the gift of song; such birds have developed rapidity of flight, and sharp sight, which are more useful. You cannot imagine a warbling vulture, for instance.

J. M.—No; it is not the ground that is on fire. Near the Caspian Sea there are tracts of land where natural gas issues from the soil; this has at some period been set on fire, and has been burning so long that the natives call it "eternal fire." In some instances, this gas occasionally collects on the surface of the water, and when set on fire, you would at first glance imagine that the water was burning.

S. P.—The Palolo is a sea-worm found in the South Pacific Ocean; the natives bake and eat them. These worms are exceedingly brittle, and if broken in many pieces, each piece swims off as if it were an entire worm.

ANNIE.—You probably mean the shawl that belonged to Charles X. of France. It was made from the fur of Persian cats; many thousands of cats' skins were utilised, and the weaving is said to have taken years. It measured eight yards square, but it was so fine that it could be compressed into the space of a large tea cup.

H. I.—It is stated that the list of dowries carried from the United States by American wives to England of recent years, in the case of only fourteen women, amounts to over six and a quarter millions sterling.

S. H. asks: "How is it that plants growing near the sea have thicker leaves than those growing inland?"————Apparently the sea salt is the cause of this phenomenon, as plants cultivated in artificially-salted soil produce thicker leaves.

EX.—"Spondulix" is certainly a slang term for money, but, like some other slang terms now out of date, it is taken from some correct word in another language. In this case it is the Greek *Spondulos*, the name of a shell that was at one time used as money both in Greece and Egypt.

GLOBE has been told that there is a portion of the earth's surface where a person's shadow falls in two directions at the same time, and he would like to know if that is true.————Not if the shadow is cast by either the sun or the moon. In the tropics it happens that on certain days and at certain positions along the line of the sun's apparent path, it is exactly overhead at noon, and in these circumstances a man stands literally on his own shadow. It follows that a slight inclination of the body either way would throw a shadow in that direction. A cursory observation of this fact has probably given rise to the statement made to you.

WHISKERS.—The ceremony observed in the House of Lords when a new peer, by right of succession, takes his seat is quite a simple one. All he has to do is to present his writ of summons to the clerk, swear the oath of allegiance, and make his bow to the Lord Chancellor.

ALIEN.—For a foreigner to become a naturalised Britisher only costs about £6, but he must have been living in this country for about five years, or have been in the service of the Crown for a similar period.

BOOKWORM.—The first dictionary of which there is any record is the Chinese work compiled by Pa-out-she, who lived about 1100 B.C. It contains about 40,000 characters, mostly hieroglyphic and not unlike the signs of the zodiac.

POSTAL RATES.

SHORT STORIES will be sent direct from these offices, post free, to any country within the Postal Union, at the following rates, prepaid:

One Year	6s. 6d.
Half Year	3s. 3d.
Three Months	1s. 8d.

Printed and Published by C. ARTHUR PEARSON LTD., at Pearson's Buildings, Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

Digitized by Google

COSTUMES COMPLETE, 10/6 SKIRTS ALONE, 5/6

THE John Noble

10/6

HOME, HOLIDAY, AND HALF-GUINEA COSTUMES

HIGHEST KNOWN VALUE FOR MONEY.

Sent by Parcel Post direct from the Largest Firm of Costumiers in the World.

PATTERNS

of these Costumes, which are made up in Two Good Durable Cloths—

I. John Noble Cheviot Serge, weighty and weather-resisting.

II. John Noble Costume Coating, smooth surfaced and of lighter-weight—

SENT POST FREE

together with NEW ILLUSTRATED 84-PAGE CATALOGUE for Ladies and Children, to all who name *Short Stories*, and need not be returned.

A Full Dress Length (6yd., 52in. wide) of either cloth for 7/6; carriage, 8d.

COLOURS of all Costumes: Black, Navy, Brown, Myrtle, Ruby, Sage Green, Electric, Fawn, Purple, and Grey.

The Three Stock Sizes are 34, 36, 38 in. round bust (under arms), Skirts being 38, 40, 43 in. long in front. Any other sizes, made to measure, 1/6 extra.

Ladies' Own Designs made up in any kind of Fabric by Skilled Dressmakers at minimum cost. A Box of 1,000 Patterns lent to select from, and sent carriage paid.

Mourning Orders executed and sent off in 12 hours.

Bankers: LONDON & MIDLAND BANK Ltd.

PLEASE MENTION "SHORT STORIES" when ordering from

JOHN NOBLE LTD.,
Brook Street Mills,
MANCHESTER.

Model 894.
New "Gordon" Costume.
New design, with well-cut bodice trimmed fancy stitching, Tailor-made Skirt, full-wide. Price 10/6 complete; carriage, 6d. Skirt alone, 5/6; carriage, 5d.

Model 900.
New Tailor-made Suit.
Very smartly-shaped Coat with velvet collar, ample skirt in the latest design. Price for the Costume, 10/6; carriage, 6d. Skirt alone, 5/6; carriage, 5d.

Model 901.
New "Curragh" Costume
A smart, well-made Bodice, trimmed on facings and sleeves, military braid. Full wide skirt. Price 10/6 complete costume; carriage, 6d. Skirt alone, 5/6; carriage, 5d.

MAKE FRUIT WINES AT HOME.
Ask for MASON'S.

MAKERS OF MASON'S EXTRACT OF HERBS. THE VERY BEST.

MASON'S GINGER WINE ESSENCE.
A Sixpenny Bottle will, in six minutes, make sixty glasses of Delicious, Non-Alcoholic Wine.
Agents Wanted.
NEWBALL & MASON, NOTTINGHAM.

MASON'S (NOTTINGHAM) COFFEE ESSENCE (THE BEST MADE)

MASON'S WINE ESSENCES
are made in all Fruit Flavours, Ginger Lemon, Orange, Blackberry etc.
YOU WON'T BE DISAPPOINTED.

MAKERS OF MASON'S EXTRACT OF HERBS. BEWARE OF IMITATIONS.

"WORTH A GUINEA A BOX."

BEECHAM'S PILLS

FOR ALL

BILIOUS & NERVOUS DISORDERS,

SUCH AS

Sick Headache, Constipation, Weak Stomach, Impaired Digestion, Disordered Liver & Female Ailments.

SALE NOW OVER SIX MILLIONS YEARLY.

In Boxes, 1s. 1½d., and 2s. 9d. each, with full directions.

Prepared only by the Proprietor,

THOMAS BEECHAM, St. Helens, Lancashire.

Sold by all Druggists and Patent Medicine Dealers everywhere.

Digitized by Google

WHY THE MILL STOPPED.

Down in Norfolk one beautiful summer day, having an hour to kill while waiting for a train, I amused myself by watching a windmill on a near-by hillside. Round and round went the great sails, so many revolutions to the minute, for a long time. Inside the mill the big stones rumbled and roared as they ground the grain. Ever and anon the miller came to the door of the upper story, looked at the sails and the sky, and then went back, like the little sentinels that come and go on the ramparts of intricate mechanical clocks.

It was the peacefulest of pictures. Not a blessed thing in all that landscape seemed to be moving save the regularly-rotating arms of that old mill. Even their shadows on the ground appeared to drag, as though weary of the effort to keep up. What on earth should people want of flour, or, indeed, of anything except a place to sleep, in a country as dead and dull as that? I was about dozing off myself when, glancing again at the mill, I remarked that the sails were going slower, and slower, and slower. Ten minutes later they stopped.

Had the man in the mill shut down on them from the inside? Was the grain all ground and the day's work done? What! at three o'clock in the afternoon? Nonsense; no. The wind had entirely died out; not a breath of air was stirring. And even though fifty farmers were waiting for their grist, *no windmill will go without wind.*

Now here are two letters written by women. I have been reading them over; they interested me. But could I make them interest you? Possibly, I said to myself, if I could only think of an illustration that would bring out the point, which is the same in both. Have I done it? You shall answer that question after you have read the letters and the comment that is to follow.

"For many years," runs the first, "I suffered from indigestion and weakness. I felt tired and weary. I had a bad taste in the mouth, my tongue being thickly coated. My appetite was poor, and what little food I ate did not agree with me, causing me pain at the chest and stomach. I saw a doctor, and took medicines from time to time, but got no good from anything until I read about the benefit many persons had obtained from Mother Seigel's Curative Syrup. I got a bottle of this medicine from Mr. Saunders, chemist, and after taking it I felt much better, the pain and nervousness being removed. I could eat better, and was stronger every way. If I ever ail anything I take a few doses of the medicine, and it never fails to set me right. I have recommended it to many, and you can make use of this statement as you like. (Signed) (Mrs.) Margaret Ledner, Prospect House, St. Lawrence, Ramsgate, January 28th, 1897."

"In the early part of 1894," says the second, "I suffered severely from indigestion. I had a bad taste in the mouth, my appetite was bad, and all the food that I took gave me pain at the chest. I was constantly belching gas, and had pain at my left side around the heart. I got extremely weak, and was unable to do anything. Nothing that I took did me any good until I began taking a medicine that had benefited my mother, called Mother Seigel's Curative Syrup. After taking this medicine a short time my appetite improved, and the food agreed with me, and I gained strength. I know many persons who have benefited by the same medicine. You can publish this statement if you think fit to do so. (Signed) (Mrs.) Harriett Folton, Durlock, Minster, near Ramsgate, January 28th, 1897."

Now let me make you a comprehensive proposition which, I think, will cover the matters we have in hand. All motion comes from power, and all power from heat produced by combustion. Whether the power be moving air, steam, electricity, or running water, it is the same. Human strength, human power, result from food digested or consumed (slowly burned) in the body. The *opposite* of this is called indigestion, or dyspepsia—the disease from which these ladies suffered. That is why they were weak, tired, weary, and unable to do anything. They were as engines are when the fire is out; as water-mills are when the streams are dry; as our windmill was when the breeze fainted.

Mother Seigel's Syrup re-kindled the fire, drove away the deadening disease, and health, life, and motion began again. Do we understand it now? I think so.

Digitized by Google